

2007

"Indispensably necessary": Cultural brokers on the Georgia frontier, 1733--1765

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**"Indispensably Necessary":
Cultural Brokers on the Georgia Frontier, 1733-1765**

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**A Dissertation presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the College of William and Mary in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

Department of History

**The College of William and Mary
August, 2007**

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APPROVAL PAGE


This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

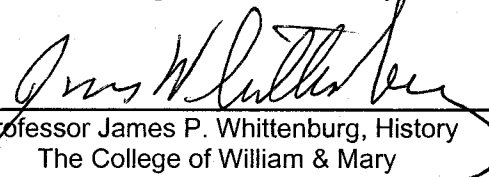


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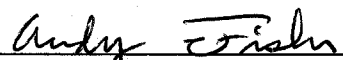
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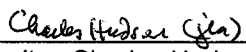
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the people who brokered cultural exchange among the various groups in and around Georgia from 1733-1765. Populating the territory were Europeans, Indians, and Africans who interacted frequently with one another despite disparate cultural traits. Cultural brokers not only brought members of each society together but did so in a manner that allowed the groups to achieve a level of understanding that would have been otherwise impossible.

The project concentrates on four categories of cultural brokers: Indian traders, military personnel, missionaries, and the Indians themselves. Members of each of these groups played critical roles as intermediaries between the natives and the newcomers. In addition to directing the material exchange between the two groups, they conveyed ideological values and diplomatic information as well. Cultural brokers served as interpreters, escorts, and emissaries. They relayed messages, invitations, and military intelligence. They explained one side to the other, interpreting language, protocol, and meanings. They consequently had an invaluable effect on maintaining positive relations between the Indians and the colonists during Georgia's first thirty years.

All of these mediators lived and worked on the frontier, but that does not mean that they were on the fringe of society. In fact, Georgia's cultural brokers enjoyed a favored position, respected for their abilities to move between Indian and colonial worlds. They were equally comfortable in each society and were fully accepted by both.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	ii
Abbreviations	iii
List of Maps	iv
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Frontier Diplomats: Traders as Agents	9
Chapter 2: Native Bridges: Indians as Facilitators	63
Chapter 3: “Perfectly Acquainted with the Country”: Military Personnel on the Georgia Frontier	139
Chapter 4: “Send Us the Good Book”: Missed Opportunities for Georgia’s Colonial Missionaries	207
Chapter 5: The Musgrove Matrimonial Dynasty: Thirty Years of Cultural Brokerage	271
Conclusion	327
Bibliography	332
Vita	353

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to offer her sincere gratitude to the many people who offered support and wisdom during the course of this project. The Institute for Southern Studies provided a generous research grant, as did the College of William and Mary. Sam Fore and the staff at the Caroliniana Library were helpful and engaging, and the interlibrary loan staff at William and Mary consistently offered a friendly and efficient service. Thanks also goes to the dissertation committee members, Charles Hudson, James Whittenburg, and Andrew Fisher, all of whom made the final review and defense of the project more rewarding. Special thanks is offered to James Axtell, whose patience, prodding, humor, and knowledge consistently offered inspiration. Clay Drees and the “old school” colleagues at Virginia Wesleyan College provided a collegial atmosphere in which to teach while working on the dissertation. Susan Kern and Laura Odendahl offered friendship, encouragement, and empathy as only fellow graduate school classmates could. Family fortunately offers unconditional love and support, and for that, the author happily acknowledges a debt of gratitude to Karen, Dad, Mom, Tip, and most especially Bruce.

Abbreviations

Caroliniana	Caroliniana Library of the University of South Carolina.
CRG	Candler, Allen D., et al., eds. <i>The Colonial Records of the State of Georgia</i> . 36 vols. Atlanta, GA: Franklin Printing and Publishing Co., 1904-1916.
DRIA	McDowell, Jr., William L. ed. <i>The Colonial Records of South Carolina: Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, 1750-1765</i> . 2 vols. Columbia, SC: South Carolina Archives Department, 1958-1970.
DRS	Urlsperger, Samuel, ed. <i>Detailed Reports on the Salzburger Emigrants who Settled in America</i> . 17 vols. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1968.
EM	Phillips Collection of Egmont Manuscripts, vols. 14200-14213, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, U. of Georgia.
EJ	McPherson, Robert G. <i>The Journal of the Earl of Egmont: Abstract of the Trustees' Proceedings for Establishing the Colony of Georgia, 1732-1738</i> . Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1962.
FHQ	<i>Florida Historical Quarterly</i>
GHQ	<i>Georgia Historical Quarterly</i>
GHS	Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, GA
HUGA	Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia.
JAH	<i>Journal of American History</i>
JSH	<i>Journal of Southern History</i>
JCHA	Easterby, et al., eds. <i>The Colonial Records of South Carolina: Journals of the Commons House of Assembly</i> . 31 vols. Columbia, SC: Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1907-1986.
JJW	Curnock, Nehemiah, ed. <i>The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.</i> vol. 1. London: Robert Culley, 1909.
JPG	Gordon, Peter. <i>Journal of Peter Gordon, 1732-35</i> . Edited by E. Merton Coulter. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1963.
JWS	Stephens, William. <i>Journal of William Stephens, 1741-45</i> . Edited by E. Merton Coulter. 2 vols. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1958-1959.
OG	Oglethorpe, James. <i>General Oglethorpe's Georgia, Colonial Letters 1733-43</i> . Edited by Mills Lane. 2 vols. Savannah, GA: Beehive Press, 1975, Reprint 1990.
SCHS	South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, SC
WJW	Outler, Albert C., ed. <i>Works of John Wesley</i> , 24 vols. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1983.
WMQ	<i>William and Mary Quarterly</i>

List of Maps

1. Southeastern North America on the Eve of the Colonization of Georgia	65
2. Savannah's Defenses, 1733-1736	144
3. Georgia, 1740-1742	160

Introduction

In 1753, relations between the Indians of the Southeast and the southern British colonies appeared to be deteriorating. The French seemed to be making successful entreaties with the natives, and the British colonial leaders were unsure of their standing among the tribes. Recent Anglo-native conflict on the frontier had given them additional cause for concern. When the South Carolinians attempted a show of force by taking a group of Savannah Indians prisoner, tensions escalated to the point that the traders refused to go into the Indian nations for fear of their lives. Needing to find a way to resolve the matter diplomatically rather than with force, Gov. James Glen of South Carolina enlisted two people to help restore friendly relations. One was Old Hop, a leading Cherokee headman who was consistently a staunch ally of the British. The other was a resident Indian trader named Cornelius Dougherty. Glen felt confident that the trader would mediate a solution to the current troubles, for "He is always a willing Composer of Differences."¹

Dougherty had obviously served to "compose differences" between the English and the Indians on numerous occasions, and his level of success ensured the governor's continued high opinion of him. But the role was a hard one to fill, requiring extensive knowledge of the language and protocol of both the Euro-American and the native worlds. Successful cultural intermediaries like Dougherty were usually people "between the borders" of two disparate societies, people who had little trouble moving from one society to the other. For most people, the borders that separated distinct cultures proved

¹Proceedings of Governor and Council, July 6, 1753, *DRIA*, 1:449.

impermeable; but for cultural brokers, the boundaries became "pathways that linked people rather than barriers that separated them."²

Because of their unique abilities to "bridge" two worlds, cultural brokers aided both sides in understanding one another. They could provide insights into the complicated world of foreigners, for they understood their thought patterns and actions and knew how to respond accordingly. Their comprehension of different perspectives made them valuable to all sides, fostering understanding where confusion had reigned. They could play their prescribed role in either, or both, societies, as comfortable in one as in the other.³

These brokers presided over the exchange of ideas, diplomatic maneuverings, and material culture and, in turn, affected many aspects of the two societies between which they maneuvered. Their influence during the contact between Euro- and native Americans was significant and the history of Indian-white relations cannot be understood without recognizing the influence these people had in both societies, as well as on their interrelations.

When the European and native cultures first encountered one another, these cultural intermediaries played a crucial role. Scholars have devoted much research to the roles played by such brokers as Doña Malinche and Jeronimo Aguilar in the Spanish conquest of Mexico, Pocahontas in Jamestown, and Sacajawea in the Lewis and Clark expedition. But after initial contact, as people settled down to a wary acceptance of the presence of another, foreign culture, the role of cultural brokers became more important. Daily routines increasingly involved interactions between unfamiliar people, and precise, unambiguous communication had to be made and understood. As Euro-Americans and

²Margaret Connell Szasz, ed., *Between Indian and White Worlds: The Cultural Broker* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 3.

³Ibid, 6; Frances Karttunen, *Between Worlds: Interpreters, Guides, and Survivors* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994), xi.

natives became increasingly involved in each other's world, mediations became a critical part of their interactions. As Nancy Hagedorn reminds us, when people from different cultures confronted each other, they "brought different cultural perceptions, expectations, meaning, and values to all their exchanges," whether they involved trade, military alliances, sexual relations, social obligations, or diplomacy.⁴ Anyone unfamiliar with the customs of the foreign culture could easily misinterpret words or actions. People who understood the protocol of both cultures limited the confusion that could arise under such circumstances by interpreting words, ideas, actions, and even material objects.

The historiography of cultural brokers in the colonial period has burgeoned during the past thirty years.⁵ In the early eighties, two studies documented the history of Northwestern fur trade families. Sylvia Van Kirk's *Many Tender Ties* centered on women – Indian and white – and their economic and social role in the fur trade as traders' wives.⁶ Jennifer Brown's *Strangers in Blood* focused on the families in general, paying particular attention to the children and the problems of miscegenation.⁷ In *The New People*, a work co-edited with Brown, Jacqueline Peterson cited the *métis* as a group who began "to serve as a conduit for goods, services, and information and [which began] to see its function as a broker."⁸ The discussion of Indians as brokers was on the rise, but it took Frederick Fausz to document the importance of non-native brokers. In his 1987

⁴Nancy Hagedorn, "Brokers of Understanding: Interpreters as Agents of Cultural Exchange in Colonial New York," *New York History* 76, No. 4 (October 1995): 380.

⁵For a thorough introduction to the historiography of cultural brokers in general, see Szasz's introduction in *Between Indian and White Worlds*, 3-20.

⁶Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society, 1670-1870* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983).

⁷Jennifer S.H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980).

⁸Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer S.H. Brown, eds., *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America* (Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 1985), 37.

article "'Middlemen in Peace and War': Virginia's Earliest Interpreters, 1608-1632," Fausz showed that whites could serve as intermediaries. Although Fausz did not portray these brokers in a favorable light, he clearly documented the importance of their presence and their actions in early Indian-white relations.⁹ Daniel Richter furthered the study of cultural mediators in 1988 with "Cultural Brokers and Intercultural Politics: New York-Iroquois Relations, 1664-1701." Nancy Hagedorn added her contribution later that year with a study on interpreters as cultural brokers in "'A Friend to Go Between Them,'" which was based on her 1995 William and Mary dissertation of the same title.¹⁰ James Axtell has also explored the complexities of intercultural communication in his "Babel of Tongues: Communicating with the Indians in Eastern North America."¹¹

Since that time, three books of collected essays and one monograph have greatly expanded the field. Frances Karttunen's *Between Worlds* is a series of biographies of individuals "who have served as interpreters, translating their languages and also their cultures for outsiders."¹² Most of the essays are true biographies, with little analysis of the main characters' roles as cultural brokers. In addition, the essays span the globe and five centuries. Similarly, Robert Grumet's *Northeastern Indian Lives* is a collection of biographies that spans several hundred years, though topics are limited to northeastern North America and all have a distinct emphasis on the subjects' roles as cultural

⁹J. Frederick Fausz, "'Middlemen in Peace and War': Virginia's Earliest Indian Interpreters, 1608-1632." *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 95, no. 1 (January 1987): 41-64.

¹⁰Daniel Richter, "Cultural Brokers and Intercultural Politics: New York-Iroquois Relations, 1664-1701." *JAH* 75, no. 1 (June 1988): 40-67; Nancy Hagedorn, "'A Friend to Go Between Them': The Interpreter as Cultural Broker During Anglo-Iroquois Councils, 1740-1770." *Ethnohistory* 35, no. 1 (Winter 1988): 60-80.

¹¹James L. Axtell, "Babel of Tongues: Communicating with the Indians in Eastern North America," in Edward G. Gray and Norman Fiering, eds., *The Language Encounters in America, 1492-1800: A Collection of Essays* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), 15-60.

¹²Karttunen, *Between Worlds*, xi.

mediators.¹³ Margaret Connell Szasz also edited a collection of essays on cultural brokers that spanned time and space.¹⁴ In a much more focused and in-depth study, *Into the American Woods*, James Merrell has explored cultural brokers on the Pennsylvania frontier. He reminds us that the physical boundary between Euro-American and Indian cultures – the “woods” – separated two fundamentally different worlds. Both sides were consequently dependent upon negotiators who could bridge the two cultures.¹⁵

Several articles have complemented these books, including Hagedorn's "Brokers of Understanding" and Clara Sue Kidwell's "Indian Women as Cultural Mediators." For the Southeast, Kathryn Braund indirectly addresses the issue of cultural brokerage in her article "Guardians of Tradition, Handmaidens to Change," a study of Creek women.¹⁶ But the exploration of cultural brokers in the colonial Southeast remains scant.

People who served as cultural brokers during the colonial period were a disparate group; age, sex, wealth, and power were not determining factors in one's ability to be an intermediary. But several elements and shared experiences generally tie the history of cultural brokers together. Without exception, cultural brokers were multilingual, being fluent in at least two, if not more, of the languages spoken by the people among which

¹³Robert Grumet, ed. *Northeastern Indian Lives, 1632-1816* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996).

¹⁴Margaret Connell Szasz, ed., *Between Indian and White Worlds: The Cultural Broker* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994).

¹⁵James H. Merrell. *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999).

¹⁶Nancy Hagedorn, "Brokers of Understanding: Interpreters as Agents of Cultural Exchange in Colonial New York," *New York History* Volume 76, No 4 (October 1995): 379-407; Clara Sue Kidwell, "Indian Women as Cultural Mediators," *Ethnohistory* 39, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 97-107; Kathryn E. Braund, "Guardians of Tradition and Handmaidens to Change; Women's Roles in Creek Economic and Social Life During the Eighteenth Century," *American Indian Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (1990): 239-258.

they moved. But linguistic ability was not enough, for intermediaries also had to have an intimate cultural familiarity that allowed them to interpret and translate elaborate protocol and ritual and their significant cultural meanings. To acquire this knowledge, brokers had to have intimate connections among both cultures. These could be acquired through familial ties -- sanguinal, affinal, or fictive -- geographical proximity, economic ties, or, most often, a combination of all three.

In the colonial Southeast, cultural brokers most often had close associations with both colonists and Indians. They could be the offspring of mixed ethnic parentage -- the most obvious evidence of intercultural mingling -- and thus well versed in the cultures of both parents. They could be married to a person of the other culture, which not only created access for the spouse and his or her culture, but also created a series of interconnections with the spouse's kin and social and economic obligations as well. The broker could have also fictive kinship ties outside his native culture created through adoption. These relationships afforded inroads to a culture that could not be secured in any other way. By definition, familial connections provide learning and understanding of the culture and necessitated obligatory conduct. These relations also afforded another advantage for cultural brokers: geographical proximity to the foreigners. Most southeastern cultural brokers had acquired their experience through prolonged residence among the Indians. Whether born or transplanted onto the frontier, they understood and were accepted by both cultures.

These prerequisites help to provide useful categories for the exploration of cultural brokers in the colonial Southeast. Most intermediaries can be grouped into one of three categories. White, predominantly male, traders -- especially principal traders who had extensive connections -- lived among the Indians and learned the intricacies of native culture. If honest and trustworthy, they gained the Indians' trust and served as conduits between the two societies. Residing among the Indians, they monitored the

disposition of the natives, provided vital diplomatic information, engaged in friendly interaction, and served as interpreters, escorts, and military recruiters. The second category, military personnel, also brokered cultural exchanges in many of the same ways. Georgia's rangers frequently resided near or among the Indians and served as the vital link between native society and colonial Georgia. But whether traders or captains, these intermediaries had to have connections to the natives, and the Indians themselves could function as cultural bridges. The most obvious examples are Indian women who formed unions with Euroamericans, but both male and female natives successfully brokered cultural exchange between the two societies. Colonial missionaries comprise a smaller fourth category. Although they had viable opportunities for cultural exchange in the Southeast, these brokers were largely unsuccessful.

In recent works on cultural brokers, the issue of marginality has also appeared. Frances Karttunen has insisted that "from their [cultural brokers'] stories, we can learn at least as much about what it is to be a misfit as about what it is to an Amerindian" or an American.¹⁷ Nancy Hagedorn has corroborated this notion by diagnosing Andrew Montour, a mixed-blood interpreter in the Northeast, with an "identity crisis," claiming that he was caught between two worlds and unsure to which he belonged.¹⁸ My research in the Southeast does not substantiate this claim. Cultural brokers did not suffer identity

¹⁷Karttunen, *Between Worlds*, xii.

¹⁸Nancy Hagedorn, "'Faithful, Knowing and Prudent': Andrew Montour as Interpreter and Cultural Broker, 1740-1772" in Nancy Shoemaker, ed., *Negotiators of Change: Historical Perspectives on Native American Women* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 57. James Merrell has argued that Montour "fashioned himself into a new sort of person, someone who drew from several traditions in order to craft a life." Although of French and Indian decent, Montour made himself equally of service to the British and was able "to fashion himself from more than one template" without suffering a crisis of conscience. But Merrell believes, unfortunately, that English America did not have a place for this new breed, and that the path which Montour chose "turned out to be a dead-end." See Merrell, "'The Cast of His Countenance': Reading Andrew Montour," in Ronald Hoffman, Mechal Sobel, and Frederica J. Teute, eds., *Through a Glass Darkly: Reflections on Personal Identity in Early America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 13-39.

crises because they were firmly rooted in both of their cultural worlds. Traders among the Indians retained ties to the European world; in fact, they were the trusted advisors of government officials, not wildmen who had "gone over to the dark side." Indians who worked to mediate relations were viewed as powerfully connected leaders, not "sell-outs" of whom their countrymen were ashamed. Indian women like Mary Musgrove who married Euroamerican men were not disparaged because of their connections with a "stranger;" instead, they enjoyed the added political and material benefits of marriage to whites while they remained tied to the people and ideals of their natal world. Offspring of these biracial unions were not marginalized within Indian communities. "Mixed-bloods" were fully accepted and sometimes even favored because of their "outside" connections. Marginality may be more applicable to those miscegenized children who were brought up in the white world, but these people rarely returned to the frontier to become cultural mediators. In short, cultural brokers in the Southeast enjoyed the full range of benefits and acceptance from both of the cultures they bridged. They do not need to be stigmatized with a "marginal" label in order to understand their subsequent actions.

CHAPTER 1

Frontier Diplomats: Traders as Agents

On a cool December day in 1737, William Stephens, the colony's secretary, took his customary afternoon stroll around the streets of Savannah. During his walk, he heard of some preparations being made for a small get-together at the Yamacraw bluff, just outside of town. The host and hostess were Jacob and Mary Matthews, an Indian trader and his mixed-blood wife who jointly operated the local Indian trading post. Stephens and a few of his friends ventured the short distance and, upon their arrival, were promptly invited to join the festivities. A roasted pig was just being brought in, and the fully set table served a variety of guests, including the trader's family, white settlers, three or four local Indians, and the Yamacraw chief Tomochichi. The group spent the better part of the evening together, talking, eating, and drinking a few glasses of wine.¹

This assemblage of diverse characters was commonplace in colonial Georgia, especially at the homes and workplaces of Indian traders such as the Matthews. Through their occupation, Indian traders brought whites and Indians together for the purpose of trading goods – specific, tangible items. Sometimes ideas and values were transmitted as well. As a result, traders had a clear and significant effect on cultural exchange, as has

¹CRG, 4:49, Dec. 13, 1737.

been well documented in recent studies.² By definition, Indian traders brought these two groups together via economic means, but they were often the catalyst for the most basic of cultural interactions as well, the interaction of the people on a much more common and familiar level than usually perceived.

First, the trading post served as a meeting place, a sort of general store where one could go to pick up a few things, leading to daily interactions as people traveled to and from their respective towns and villages. Indians knew to bring their furs and skins there to trade, and whites knew they would most likely find a European friend among native strangers there when traveling through unfamiliar territory. The trading post encouraged impromptu social gatherings, friends catching up with each other, meeting new people, sharing a bit of news or the latest gossip; it could also be the stage for people disagreeing over prices, animosity flaring, and drunks getting out of hand and starting a brawl. For good or ill, the trading post was often the locale where these two groups mingled.

Second, traders not only worked with the Indians, most lived among them as well. A trader's life was not remote or solitary. Trading posts were almost always located in close proximity to the Indians to whom they catered, for obvious economic reasons. Often, the traders set up shop within the Indian town. On the occasions when they settled on the outskirts, it was not because the Indians wanted to separate the trader from their village, but rather it was usually a concern over the trader's livestock and the damage it

²Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels: Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685-1815* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1993) and Michael P. Morris, *The Bringing of Wonder: Trade and the Indians of the Southeast, 1700-1783* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999.)

could do to the natives' crops. In these instances, the traders were still located just a "very convenient distance" away.³ The trader's outpost included his store, his residence, a few outbuildings, and as much acreage as he could cultivate, although the Indians retained ownership of the land.⁴ The storehouse needed to be large enough to serve many customers and to hold a significant number of goods at any one time, for the trader rarely traveled overland to his supplier more than once a year. The house was the trader's primary residence, and although he traveled some, he spent the majority of the year there. The only significant period during which he did not reside in the Indian town was when he made his annual trek to the coast to be resupplied and to check in with imperial officials. The average trader homestead included things familiar to any other colonial household, including various outbuildings such as corncribs and chicken houses. Crops and livestock were both raised on the land.⁵ The homestead needed to be able to support not only the trader but usually an Indian wife and their "mixed-blood" offspring as well. The majority of traders strengthened relations and established family ties by marrying local Indian women and frequently were themselves the result of traders' unions with the natives.⁶

³James Adair, *History of the American Indians*, ed. by Samuel Cole Williams (New York: Promontory Press, 1930), 443.

⁴Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 85.

⁵Adair, *History*, 442-443; Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 85-86.

⁶James Axtell, *The Indians' New South: Cultural Change in the Colonial Southeast*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 49; Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 83.

By marrying a local Indian woman, the trader immediately secured a place in Indian society; he was no longer an outsider, and in the Indians' matrilineal culture, he became affiliated with his wife's clan. This secured him immediate rights and obligations and included him in the local community. His wife's family also supplied him with his first customers – a guaranteed ready market – and further strengthened the trader's ties to the native community. On a more personal level, an Indian wife offered additional advantages, companionship and labor the most basic among them. But Indian wives could provide a more subtle benefit: a crash course in Indian culture. Indian wives became the traders' personal guide to the cultural nuances of Indian society. They were people who could interpret the language and cultural protocol. They offered an inside set of eyes to watch over things and warn of danger or problems, and with their knowledge and guidance, they provided a fast track to acculturation for their Euroamerican husbands.⁷

The marriage also secured an alliance with the headman, usually a relative – and most often an uncle – of the bride. This was just one of the many ways in which resident traders promulgated local connections and secured the approval and often the protection of the Indian leaders. Doing so was critical to his success as a trader.⁸ Without the support of local headmen, the trader would have no market, no support, and no livelihood. The odds and the danger in foreign territory would be overwhelmingly against him. Fortunately, connections between traders and natives benefitted both

⁷Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 83-84.

⁸Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 83.

parties. The families of headmen allied with traders were always ensured of getting preferential treatment, especially first access to his products, and having an alliance with someone who was connected to the European world was always a benefit. Thus, if the trader was trustworthy enough, he could usually secure himself both a wife and the support of a local chief. But he had to win their confidence first.

Proficient traders achieved success only by gaining the trust of their customers. Most of the resident traders lived among the Indians for years, during which time the traders and Indians built up confidence in one another and acquired a mutual respect. A memorial from ten well-respected resident traders advising Governor James Wright on a proper course of action claimed that they were qualified to give such counsel because they had been “unto the Creek and Cherokee Indians Nations for upwards of ten years” and had consequently “acquired a Confidence with them.”⁹ The Creeks spoke up themselves for resident trader Lachlan McGillivray when they verified that the trader “came very young to our Nation” and as a result of decades of living among them, “knew well how we lived.”¹⁰ The resident traders knew that their very existence depended on their relations with the Indians. One of the most prominent Creek traders, George Galphin, told British officials that he was able to establish such good relations with the

⁹A Memorial of the Principal Traders to the Creek and Cherokee Nations to Governor Wright, 1771, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 2:374.

¹⁰Enclosure no. 6, Talk of the Creeks May 1, 1771 [Memorial of James Wright to the Earl of Hillsborough, Dec 12, 1771], *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 2:367.

Indians because “I allwise made it a rule to tell them the Truth...” As a result, “they allways put so much Confidence in what I say.”¹¹

This is not the usual perception of trader-Indian relations. Traders have often been viewed as people of questionable character and seen as the cause of many problems in Indian affairs. William Stephens, secretary of the colony and, after 1741, in charge of authorizing Georgia traders, believed that they “may be looked on as a turbulent Sett of people.”¹² Indian agent John Dobell believed them to be “such a set of bad principled, or rather no principled Men, that No Danger which might possibly happen is too great to be feared.”¹³ Governors from the royal period found fault with their character as well. Governor James Wright believed that in general, they “were not the honestest or Soberest People” and thought that most of the Indian problems had been caused by “the great misconduct and abuses committed Amongst them by the Traders and Packhorsemen employed there.”¹⁴

Although some of that reputation is warranted, a finer distinction between the different classes of traders needs to be made, one to which the governor alluded. The trading business involved a strict hierarchy. At the top were the merchants, the people with the connections abroad who usually lived in port towns such as Charles Town or

¹¹George Galphin to Henry Laurens, February 7, 1776 in Philip M. Hamer, ed. *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 16 vols. (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1968), 2:94.

¹²*JWS*, 2:124, July 13, 1744.

¹³John Dobell to the Trustees, October 29, 1745, *CRG*, 24:432.

¹⁴James Wright to the Board of Trade, August 27, 1764, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 2:51.

Savannah. They were the suppliers. Next were the resident traders, also known as “master traders” or “principal traders.” These terms designated someone who maintained established places of business among the Indians and kept them well-stocked. They usually had achieved a measure of wealth and had strong connections to both influential suppliers, who could ensure the continued availability and high quality of his goods, and allied Indian leaders, who could ensure his protection. Beneath the resident traders were those in the employ of the master traders – a lower class of traders, packhorsemen, and servants – a younger, less savory group who traveled back and forth between the suppliers and the resident traders.¹⁵

Most of the complaints about Georgia trader abuses before 1763 centered on the more transient packhorsemen rather than the resident traders. William Stephens admitted that it was “those Pack horsemen and other Servile people employ’d by our Indian traders [who] are for the most part a Parcell of loose debauched Fellows, who ought to have a strict hand kept over them, to prevent giving offence to the Indians in amity with us.”¹⁶ Governor Wright agreed that it was “those they employ as Packhorsemen or servants, who are generally the very worst People” and whose actions had “a very bad effect.”¹⁷ Even the Indians made the distinction, as when they complained to Governor Wright of the “abuses by the People Employed by the Traders as packhorsemen &c.” When the

¹⁵See Eirlys Barker, “‘Much Blood and Treasure’: South Carolina’s Indian Traders 1670-1755” (Ph.D. diss., College of William and Mary, 1993) esp. ch. 3, pp. 92-111, for a detailed explanation of these and more particular rankings.

¹⁶*JWS*, 1:63, April 9, 1742.

¹⁷James Wright to the Board of Trade, June 28, 1766, in *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 2:157.

governor passed on the Indian talk to the Board of Trade, he added his assurance that he believed the sentiments to be “very True.”¹⁸ When tensions between the British and the French and their allied Indians flared in 1744, the principal traders who resided nearest the French were called in to help assess the situation. One of the resulting regulations that they hoped would “tend more to our Security” was to carefully regulate the packhorsemen and servants, making “those Traders who emply’d them in their Service” accountable for their whereabouts. The resident traders were generally trusted; the packhorsemen were not.¹⁹

Another group guilty of causing problems with the Indians and tarnishing the reputation of traders in general were the unlicensed traders. For the majority of the period, Georgia traders were closely regulated through a strict licensing system. But trouble with South Carolina traders and concern over which colony had the right to govern the Indian trade often limited the effectiveness of the system. Many complaints about traders arose against unlicensed traders or, after 1763, when general licensing was approved and alarming numbers of traders entered Indian territory.

At the time of Georgia’s founding, many officials, especially James Oglethorpe, were concerned over the abuses perpetrated by Indian traders and the subsequent problems they had caused for various colonies’ Indian relations, especially those of South Carolina. Oglethorpe was determined to have Georgia enter into native relations on a different footing than South Carolina and thus sought to initiate better relations and more

¹⁸James Wright to the Board of Trade, July 5, 1764, in *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 2:38.

¹⁹*JWS*, 2:133, August 10, 1744.

regulated trade from the beginning. First, he took the time to approach the local natives for permission and help, signing a treaty of friendship and alliance with the Yamacraws that gave the colonists permission to settle Savannah and following that with another treaty with the larger Creek Nation. Second, he asked the Indians what they perceived to be the major problems with the trading system, and third, he addressed many of their concerns in the resulting law that went into effect on June 24, 1735.²⁰ The “Act for Maintaining the Peace with the Indians in the Province of Georgia” required that anyone who wanted to trade with the Indians must be licenced, by a Savannah official, in order to do so. That required approval and a £5 fee, and the license was valid for only a year and only in one particular town. To renew the license, the trader must return to Savannah and reapply, allowing officials to review his conduct of the previous year before reissuing. At any time, the trader may have to forfeit his license if he did not obey all laws or if he traded with Indians with whom the colony was not at peace. Only one trader was allowed per Indian town, and anyone found operating without a license would be fined £100 and subject to confiscation of all his goods.²¹

South Carolina was predictably upset by this new law, balking at turning over the licensing power to Georgia. For six years, the controversy between the two colonies raged. But by 1741 they had reached an agreement that had them share the authority of licensing the traders, with each one distributing half of the licenses.²² Georgia officials

²⁰*EJ*, 63, Sept. 11, 1734.

²¹By-laws and Laws, March 21, 1733, an Act for Maintaining the Peace with the Indians in the Province of Georgia, *CRG*, 1:31-41.

²²*CRG*, 5:546-48, Sept 10, 1741.

took their founder's policy seriously, hoping to restrict unfavorable characters from going among the Indians and thoroughly reviewing the actions of those allowed. Consistent with the original 1735 law, traders found operating without a license had their goods seized, and licensed traders faced an annual review. Those found lacking had their licenses revoked.²³

Despite Georgia officials' best attempts, however, the problem of renegade traders persisted. These were the ones who fostered the traders' collective bad reputation. Oglethorpe reported early on that the Indians had good reason to be discontented, with "great Numbers of Vagrants being gone up without License," and many licensed traders regularly complained about the intrusion of those illegitimate interlopers.²⁴ Renegade traders wreaked havoc on the Indians, the legal traders, the trade itself, and British relations with the Indians. The unlicensed traders enticed the Indians to come into the woods to trade with them or they set up shop on the hunters' path home to be the first to encounter the Indians laden with deerskins. This gave them "the advantage and chance of intercepting the Customers" of legal traders.²⁵ They could

²³*EJ*, 167, June 11, 1736; For examples of reviews and revocations, see Patrick Mackay, Indian Agent to Mr. Jones, May 28, 1735, *CRG*, 21:10 and various entries in *JWS*, 2:116, June 25, 1744, 117, June 27, 1744, 121, July 5, 1744, 122, July 11, 1744.

²⁴Copy of a Letter from Col. Oglethorpe to the Accomptant to the Trustees for Georgia, June 15, 1739, *CRG*, 30:84; Thomas Causton to the Trustees, July 25, 1738, *CRG*, 22:210; James McQueen and Theophilus Perriman Traders in the Upper Creek Nation to the Governor, 1762, *CRG*, 8:756; Petitions of John Brown, Alexander McIntosh, James McLean, and James Germany, Indian traders addressed to his Excellency the governor, 1762, *CRG*, 8:708.

²⁵Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Feb. 4, 1758, *CRG*, 7:705; *CRG*, 4:203, Sept. 19, 1738.

undercut the set prices for items, thus causing great consternation among the Indians and legitimate traders alike.²⁶ By this practice, “the fair traders in the Nations, must be greatly Injured” not only in profit but also in their relations with their customers.²⁷ This custom, Superintendent of Indian Affairs Edmond Atkin argued, was one “which makes the Indians very uneasy, suspecting therefrom that the latter wrong them.”²⁸ In addition, since being unlicensed also meant being unregulated, the illegitimate traders could treat the Indians with impunity. They frequently traded liquor for the skins, which rarely resulted in a fair price. Once the Indians were drunk, they often lost more of their valuables, either through fast-talking or outright theft by the traders, and frequently became embroiled in disagreements and physical fights.²⁹ Even once the Indians sobered up, many of them remained “mischievous” when they realized they had little to show for their time and labor spent hunting.³⁰ The presence of these unlicensed traders also allowed other indebted traders the opportunity to restock and return to the Indian nation without facing their creditors in town. Confrontation between the two groups led to more chaos. In one instance, a riot ensued, whereby “several unlicensed Traders insult[ed]

²⁶James Wright to the Board of Trade, Aug. 27, 1764, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 2:51.

²⁷*JWS*, 2:230, July 25, 1745.

²⁸Wilbur R. Jacobs, ed. *The Appalachian Indian Frontier; the Edmond Atkin Report and Plan of 1755* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), 34.

²⁹For examples see Thomas Causton to the Trustees, January 16, 1735, in *OG*, 1:96; Common Council Instructions of the Bailiffs and Recorder of Savannah, *CRG*, 32:113; *CRG*, 9:75, July 14, 1763.

³⁰*JWS*, 2:230, July 25, 1745.

some of those legally appointed, wounding, assaulting, and binding two or three, and threatened immediate Death to them.”³¹

One final problem added to the traders’ poor reputation: the overabundance of traders within Indian country. Georgia officials faced this problem from the beginning, especially during the years of controversy with South Carolina over which colony would regulate the Indian trade. Indian agent Patrick Mackay accused South Carolina of “grant[ing] licenses to every person that demands one.” The overpopulation of Indian traders could lead to “a dangerous consequence” because the resulting competition would require the traders to underbid each other. To compensate, traders would be tempted “to cheat and play tricks with the Indians and by this means ruin the trade and maybe incense the Indians to a rupture.”³² But the problem was not a real issue until the 1760s. In the wake of the Seven Years’ War, the concept of “general licensing” overturned the traditional method of allowing one trader per Indian town. Rather than assigning one trader to a specific locale, the general license gave the holder the right to trade anywhere in Indian territory. In addition, virtually the sole requirement to obtain a license was the payment of a small fee. This created the problem, as Governor Wright lamented, that “every Man has to demand a License & Trades where he Pleases.”³³ As a result, all kinds of opportunistic people obtained licenses and rushed to the frontier, hoping to make their fortunes. The Indian villages could not absorb them all, and having several traders

³¹*CRG*, 4:203, Sept. 19, 1738; *CRG*, 4:585, June 2, 1740.

³²Patrick Mackay to James Oglethorpe, November 20, 1734, in *OG*, 1:64.

³³Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 100; James Wright to the Board of Trade, June 28, 1766, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 2:57.

working “in one & the Same Town” caused “almost continual disputes & quarrels between the traders and Indians.”³⁴ General licensing meant more competition and an increase in the number of less savory characters flooding Indian country. The new system allowed a “lower class” of trader among the Indians, “to the great injury of the regular trader.”³⁵ The principal traders residing among the Indians before the Proclamation of 1763 had not necessarily been saints, but the changes in the system admitted more people with fewer credentials, increased competition, and fostered a reputation of traders in the last half of the eighteenth-century as “the very worst and most abandoned Set of Men.”³⁶

For the most part, the low reputation assigned to Georgia Indian traders came about because of the actions of those lower ranking packhorsemen, those who were unlicensed, and the overwhelming number who were allowed to seek their fortune among the Indians in the wake of the Seven Years’ War. The principal resident traders who were fully licensed and regulated and lived among the Indians between 1733 and 1765 were sometimes guilty of cheating and abuse. For the most part, however, they knew that their lives and livelihoods depended upon the Indians among whom they worked and resided, and they behaved accordingly. If these people had been consistently abusive, they would have lost the patronage of their headmen, their livelihood, and perhaps their lives. When traders did make such mistakes, which they occasionally did, the natives

³⁴James Wright to the Board of Trade, August 27, 1764, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 2:51.

³⁵Adair, *History*, 394.

³⁶James Wright to the Board of Trade, August 27, 1764, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 2:51.

were quick to react and remind the traders that they were living in local towns at the Indians' discretion. They often alerted officials to the traders who were performing contrary to the Indians' desires, and in some instances, they were able to effect a change through diplomatic measures, such as when they requested that a particular trader's license be revoked.³⁷ When that avenue did not work, they often took matters into their own hands. Indians would not tolerate severe abuse from the traders who lived among them and would retaliate by ransacking the trader's storehouse, destroying his property, or attacking his person. More than one trader returned home to find his goods missing, several had their bodies beaten and their "ears cropt," and a few paid the ultimate price with their lives.³⁸

If the resident traders lost the protection of their headmen or the support of their wives' clansmen, there was too much to risk. Generally, principal traders tried to keep the peace, humor everyone, mediate and smooth things over, and ensure the continued flow of products that meant everyone would profit. Like any other group of varied people, they still had their disagreements and personality conflicts, but generally speaking, the resident traders were trusted members of Indian society.

After obtaining status and acceptance reserved for a few, resident traders were in a unique position – physically and metaphorically – to broker cultural exchange between

³⁷For example, the Yamacraws requested in 1735 that Joseph Watson's license be revoked. Watson was accused of various crimes against the Indians, including plying them with liquor, beating one named Esteechee, and brandishing a gun at Tallahumnee; Thomas Causton to the Trustees, January 16, 1735, in *OG*, 1:97.

³⁸Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 105; *JWS*, 1:223, July 4, 1743; Adair, *History*, 151.

the Indians and the Europeans. Having gained the trust and friendship of the Indians, traders could serve as advisors and spokesmen, messengers and ambassadors, the perfect agents to negotiate diplomacy between the two cultures. They could be informers for either the Indians or their own government or both. They could be interpreters of both language and protocol. They could be ambassadors of goodwill or negligence.

Government officials were aware of their knowledge and talents and depended on them heavily, understanding that there was a vast wealth of information they could provide. What to other people seemed strange and foreign was to the trader everyday life. They were virtual fonts of cultural knowledge; they could translate the word, the message, the symbol. They knew who the key characters were amongst their neighbors, their positions, their strategies, and their motivations. They knew who should be where and what it meant if they were not. Knowledge was the key to intercultural relations, and in many cases, the traders were the only ones who had it. Far from being ostracized, this group was embraced by both British imperial officials and Indian leaders and were central to the story of the relations between the two. Even when things went wrong between the Indians and the traders, even when principal traders suffered the occasional fall from grace, the worry about how that would affect relations between the two groups was so prevalent that the traders and their actions were still front and center; they were never relegated to the sidelines.

Traders' personal experience of interacting with natives happened every day, but it was not just their own interaction with the natives that made them so central to the story. Their position also granted them a unique perspective from which they could

report to others who might not be privy to the information, whether through physical distance or cultural ignorance. By their very physical location in the center of it all, they had a unique perspective from which to understand the cultures and to effect intercultural relations. The very existence of European traders working and living in the Indians' country brought the two groups together, and their relations highlight the cultural interaction that was prevalent on the colonial Georgia frontier. Their physical proximity in both business and pleasure, times of friendship and animosity, ensured they would develop a relationship, for good or ill, that would influence the wider historical picture of cultural interrelations in Georgia.

* * * * *

Although they played a vital role in many cultural exchanges, traders' role in brokering the diplomatic relations of Georgia with the Indians is often overlooked. However, the evidence is unequivocal: their role should not be underestimated. They had a hand in virtually every aspect of diplomatic relations; they relayed messages and talks between colonial officials and Indian headmen, interpreted at meetings, conveyed diplomatic invitations, escorted Indians to colonial towns and offered formal introductions, served as ambassadors, and provided the majority of the intelligence available regarding the Indians. No other group of people was as qualified to moderate these exchanges as were the traders, and thus they became the trusted agents of Georgia officials.

One of the important ways in which traders served to broker diplomatic exchange was through their language skills. In order to live and work among the Indians, traders

had to be fluent in the local tongue. As a result, they were the logical choice to be employed as interpreters. Trustworthy people who spoke the native language and could be depended upon to be official translators were invaluable; as Governor James Wright reported, “Such an officer always was, now is, and will be as long as we have any connection with Indians absolutely necessary.”³⁹ In 1750, one young man who had been a former apprentice was offered a license to trade among the Indians because “he speaks the Indian language.”⁴⁰ There was an obvious language talent shared by most traders, and when looking for proper individuals to serve as official translators, Georgia officials were encouraged to look among the traders for the best qualified.⁴¹

During the December soiree at the Matthews’ house in 1737, trader Mary Matthews not only cooked for and entertained her guests, she also interpreted for them. This was an impromptu occasion, and traders such as Mary often facilitated casual interaction between the two cultures in this capacity. In this instance, the group dined with each other for hours, all the while with Mary translating in a convivial atmosphere. This was no formal official meeting, but before Stephens adjourned for the night, the Yamacraw chief Tomochichi had a message for the Georgia Trustees: he had made a grant of a few acres of land to the Matthews, and he hoped not to offend the Trustees by requesting that their cattle no longer be allowed to roam freely on it. Stephens promised to so inform them and, in his journal to the Trustees, delineated the exact location and

³⁹James Wright to the Board of Trade, July 5, 1769, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 2:329.

⁴⁰By-laws and laws, June 6, 1750, *CRG*, 1:545; Benjamin Martyn to Vice President Henry Parker of Georgia, July 14, 1750, *CRG*, 31:199.

⁴¹Richard Woodward to Patrick Mackay, August 16, 1734, *CRG*, 20:72.

landmarks that defined the site.⁴² Although not acting in an official capacity that night, Mary served to strengthen the ties between the Indians and the whites, especially by entertaining colonial officials such as Stephens, and her translations carried weight in this evening of friendship and business. In his report to the Trustees, Stephens did not question the veracity of her translations even though she stood to gain from the transaction, and he did not suggest that the Trustees should either.

The Matthews were well known for their abilities to mediate across the cultural divide and did so frequently in both official and non-official capacities. In fact, Mary served as James Oglethorpe's personal interpreter for over ten years, at an annual salary of £100. When Oglethorpe first arrived in the colonies, he sought out Mary and her first husband, another trader named Johnny Musgrove. The couple had set up a trading post on the Savannah River at Yamacraw Bluff in the early 1730s. Whites were not permitted to settle in the area, but both Mary and John were descendants of Indian-white unions. Consequently, they held a virtual monopoly on the trade in the region, and with the cultural connections they both shared with their customers, their establishment thrived.⁴³

In the earliest years of the colony, servants of the Georgia Trustees employed this trading couple as their official interpreters almost exclusively. The Musgroves translated for the very first meeting between Oglethorpe's entourage and the local Yamacraw Indians when their chief Tomochichi came to pay his compliments to the general. They

⁴²CRG, 4:49, December 13, 1737.

⁴³Helen Todd, *Tomochichi: Indian Friend of the Georgia Colony* (Atlanta: Cherokee Publishing Company, 1977), 80-81; Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 63, 80.

also presided over the subsequent negotiations and agreement that allowed for settling the site of Savannah.⁴⁴ On that evening, dusk fell before the English could set up camp, and consequently they retired to the Musgroves' home where a "handsome supper" was provided.⁴⁵ In late spring, Johnny interpreted at a large meeting which included the Creek headmen and resulted in a treaty of cession, trade, and friendship.⁴⁶ When the Musgroves broke Oglethorpe's cardinal rule of selling rum at their trading post a few months later, Oglethorpe's dependence on them was so heavy that he "did not care to disoblige them, because they are the only interpreters we have to the Indians."⁴⁷ Either Mary or Johnny presided over virtually every other meeting between Tomochichi and Oglethorpe, through which the two leaders developed a strong friendship. When Tomochichi and seven other Indians traveled to England in the summer of 1734, Johnny Musgrove accompanied them as their interpreter and was paid well for his talents.⁴⁸ The Indians visited the king and the Board of Trustees while in London, with the words of

⁴⁴Sarah Blackwell Guber Temple and Kenneth Coleman, eds., *Georgia Journeys, Being an Account of the Lives of Georgia's Original Settlers and Many Other Early Settlers from the Founding of the Colony in 1732 until the Institution of Royal Government in 1754* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1961), xy; David H. Corkran, *The Creek Frontier, 1540-1783* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 83; *JPG*, 35.

⁴⁵*JPG*, 35.

⁴⁶Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 84.

⁴⁷James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, August 12, 1733, in *OG*, 1:20.

⁴⁸Minutes of the Common council of the Trustees for establishing the Colony of Georgia, October 16, 1734 in *CRG*, 2:75 and *EJ*, 67, Oct. 18, 1734. Musgrove was paid £100 and a grant of five hundred acres in Georgia. The grant was approved posthumously in September 1735. Johnny had died in June, but Mary kept it in trust for their son. See *EJ*, 109, Sept. 24, 1735.

Tomochichi who “spoke in the name of the rest” being translated by Musgrove “paragraph by paragraph.”⁴⁹ Months later, near the end of their visit, the Indians met with the Trustees again to discuss fair prices for trade goods. In this instance, Musgrove disappointed the Trustees as he was reportedly too inebriated to perform the required services. The difficult task of communicating across the language barrier became impossible without a proper interpreter: “we could neither side understand our meanings.”⁵⁰ Musgrove might be allowed an occasional lackluster performance, but the topic on the slate for that day should also be considered: trade regulations. The official negotiations were supposed to continue the next day to allow time for Musgrove to sober up, but later that night, one of the board members engaged in casual conversation an Indian who could speak limited English. Through this exchange, the Trustees discovered that the Indian trading business could be quite lucrative. Perhaps Musgrove’s drunkenness was a ruse to avoid the conversation altogether, knowing that few specifics could be ascertained without the aid of an interpreter.⁵¹

While Musgrove was abroad with the Indians, his wife remained in Georgia, serving as official translator and relaying critical information about the state of affairs in

⁴⁹*EJ*, 58, July 3, 1734.

⁵⁰*EJ*, 66, Oct. 9, 1734.

⁵¹The trustees were surprised to find out after directly inquiring of the interpreter “who is likewise an Indian trader” the particulars, concluding that the Indians had to pay £160 worth of skins, which equated to £240 “for what cost the trader but 80 English pound.” Although the conversation was directed against traders licensed under South Carolina’s policy, this inquiry surely made Musgrove uneasy. *EJ*, 66, Oct. 9, 1734.

the Indian country.⁵² On June 11, 1735, Mary presided over a ceremony that included headmen from both the Upper and Lower Creek towns as well as the Yamacraw nation. Participants established a definitive boundary for the colony and most likely began negotiations that allowed for the establishment of Augusta.⁵³

When Methodist founder John Wesley arrived in Georgia in 1736, Mary also served as the interpreter for his conversations with Tomochichi.⁵⁴ As interest in missionary work among the Indians increased, she often welcomed various clergymen to her house. Many of the religious men in early Georgia learned much about Creek beliefs from Mary, and she endeavored to teach the Creek language to at least four, including John Wesley, George Whitefield, Benjamin Ingham, and Count Ziegenhagen.⁵⁵

While the Musgroves were the preferred official choices for interpreter in the mid-1730s, a few others were occasionally employed, including one of the Musgroves' former indentured servants, Jacob Matthews. In January 1735, he joined a reconnaissance mission as interpreter to several of Tomochichi's relatives in a combined English-Yamacraw retaliatory raid against the Spanish.⁵⁶ Shortly thereafter, he wed the widowed Mary Musgrove⁵⁷ and was married to her until his death in 1742, during which

⁵²Mary Musgrove to James Oglethorpe, July 17, 1734, *CRG*, 20:63.

⁵³Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 91; Todd, *Tomochichi*, 86; Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 41.

⁵⁴Todd, *Tomochichi*, 97.

⁵⁵Todd, *Tomochichi*, 87; Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 97.

⁵⁶Captain George Dunbar to James Oglethorpe, January 23, 1735, in *OG*, 1:110.

⁵⁷Johnny Musgrove died June 12, 1735.

time he took over Johnny's role both as trader and as interpreter for the Indians in tandem with his wife. This former servant would win over Oglethorpe and other officials through his interpreting skills, and during the War of Jenkins' Ear, Oglethorpe made him a captain and placed him in charge of twenty rangers at Mount Venture. During the siege of St. Augustine, he commanded a group of allied Indians, and other Trustees' servants reported that he was well-liked by the Indians and enjoyed a good rapport with them.⁵⁸ Matthews' story exemplifies the type of unusual path a man's life on the Georgia frontier could take: starting out as an indentured servant, marrying a prominent Indian woman, running a trading establishment, becoming a military officer, and all the while functioning as a critical mediator of cultural exchange.

As long as Oglethorpe remained in Georgia, Mary and her trader husbands served as Georgia's official interpreters. They presided over almost every important occasion involving diplomatic affairs with the Indians during the colony's first decade. As Oglethorpe's official interpreter, Mary rarely failed to appear when called upon, and she was his trusted advisor for close to ten years. He especially needed her services when hostilities broke out between the Spanish and the English at the onset of the War of Jenkins' Ear in 1739. As Oglethorpe led his forces into battle, he had many Indian allies, and he called upon Mary frequently to translate for him. In Oglethorpe's opinion, any other available interpreters were second best to Mary, and he did not hold as much faith in them as he did this mixed-blood Indian trader.

⁵⁸Mark Carr to James Campbell, January 28, 1740, in *OG*, 2:448; James Oglethorpe to Colonel Stephens, February 1, 1740, *CRG*, vol. 22, pt. 2:312.

When Oglethorpe initiated the siege against St. Augustine in 1740 and led the defense against the Spanish invasion in 1742, traders' services as interpreters became even more important. Georgia officials needed interpreters to recruit military allies, keep open lines of communication, and negotiate with friends and enemies. For Oglethorpe's part, he trusted Mary beyond any other interpreters, requesting her presence, sending scout boats to pick her up and bring her to the encampment, and requiring her to stay in camp for months at a time.⁵⁹ The Indians also preferred Mary, "whom they had great Confidence in," and because she spoke four languages – English, Creek, Cherokee, and Yamasee – she could help Oglethorpe communicate with all of his allies. While at war, Mary resided among the Indian troops "as usual as an interpreter," clearly an omnipresent mediator.⁶⁰ When Mary was not immediately available, Oglethorpe was fortunate to find another trader "who had lived several Years up in the Cherokee nation, and [spoke] that Language perfectly" to communicate with his allies until she could arrive.⁶¹ But it was not just on the battlefield where these language skills were needed. In Mary's case, Georgia officials asked her to translate for them at her house in town in Savannah, at the Cowpen trading post near the Yamacraw bluff, and at her outpost at Mount Venture, as well as in the battle camps where the Indian allies were aiding Oglethorpe.⁶²

⁵⁹*CRG*, vol. 4, pt. 2:163, June 10, 1741.

⁶⁰*JWS*, 2:80, March 12, 1744; Todd, *Tomochichi*, 80.

⁶¹*CRG*, 4:620, July 15, 1740.

⁶²*CRG*, vol. 4, pt. 2:160, June 6, 1741.

During the Spanish onslaughts in 1742, Mary's second trading post at Mount Venture was destroyed by Spanish-allied Indians, about the same time her second husband, Jacob Matthews, passed away. Yet when Oglethorpe required her translating skills again, she traveled to the outpost of Fort Frederica to render her services.⁶³ When Oglethorpe left the colony in July 1743, he took a diamond ring from his finger and gave it Mary, along with £200 and a promise for more to come in an attempt to repay her for her services, her alliance, and her friendship.⁶⁴

Although Mary and her consecutive husbands were the preferred choice of early Georgia officials for diplomatic communication, they were not always available, and other people who had experience among the Indians and knew their language could served as interpreters. But trusted ones who could be used in diplomatic affairs were in short supply. Qualified linguists were so scarce that officials always seemed to be short-handed, and rarely was more than one available at a time. This occasionally put Georgia officials in an awkward position. Sometimes they were at a loss to even receive the Indians, as William Stephens was when he had no interpreter available.⁶⁵ At other times, it forced officials to rely on an interpreter to give accurate translations even when the linguist had a vested interest in the outcome. For example, Lewis Byron accompanied five Chickasaw headmen into Savannah in 1757 so that they could have a "friendly talk" with the officials. Upon their arrival in council, Byron was told that charges had been

⁶³Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 110.

⁶⁴Kenneth Coleman, *Colonial Georgia: a History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976), 84.

⁶⁵CRG, vol. 4, pt. 2:85, Feb. 6, 1741.

levied against him regarding “mal practices” that included carrying rum to the Indian nation, and thus for the present conversation, the Georgia officials could not “admit him for Interpreter.” But when no other substitutes could be found, Byron was sworn in and interpreted for the meeting.⁶⁶ Certainly this was not ideal, but with so few qualified interpreters, officials had little choice.

Traders understood that their language skills were valuable to colonial officials, and as scarce commodities, they could set their price accordingly. In 1734, Indian agent Patrick Mackay was attempting to find an interpreter to accompany him on a diplomatic mission to the Creek Nation but was having little luck. Since the Musgroves were currently employed by Oglethorpe, the agent knew of at least two other interpreters who met his standards: one was Daniel Savage, Oglethorpe’s top recommendation, and the other was John Barton, but neither would easily acquiesce to Mackay’s plea. Savage “flatly refused to go” and although Barton was willing, he required £35 a month and two horses, a price Mackay believed was too high.⁶⁷ The agent would have to justify the cost to the Trustees to have any chances of reimbursement and the price needed to be in line with other expenditures. Mary Musgrove, Oglethorpe’s official interpreter, was paid £100 annually, and more than thirty years later, interpreter Moses Nunes had an annual salary of £50.⁶⁸ There is no doubt that Barton’s monthly demand seemed unusually high.

⁶⁶Proceedings of the Governor and Council, April 14, 1757, *CRG*, 7:539-541.

⁶⁷Patrick Mackay to the Trustees, Aug. 10, 1734, *CRG*, 20:69; Patrick Mackay to James Oglethorpe, November 20, 1734, in *OG*, 1:62.

⁶⁸Harman Verelst to William Stephens, July 25, 1746, *CRG*, 31:44; James Wright to the Board of Trade, July 5, 1769, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 2:329.

Although Mackay initially scoffed at the high price Barton was hoping to fetch, he knew that interpreters were both necessary and rare and allowed the possibility that he might be forced to pay Barton his asking price. Mackay looked for other possibilities beyond these two, but to no avail.⁶⁹

Mackay returned to Savage and even employed others to plead with the trader on his behalf; Savage's answer that "he would not go under eighty pounds per month" promptly ended the conversation. The trader was clear in refusing to go and set his price accordingly high. In his defense, he most likely was not price gouging, since he knew the figure was an outrageous sum to which neither the agent nor the Trustees would ever agree. He simply did not want to go and hoped to end the discussion conclusively after months of badgering from various people. One of the men who tried to coax him into going knew that Savage was adamant in his refusal: he called him a "thick scull bitch of a fellow" when he "swore he would not go."⁷⁰ The traders knew the value of their linguistic skills but often no price could be offered to induce them to join a particular expedition. Mackay's trip entailed a month-long journey and an indefinite stay in the Creek nation, during which time the interpreter had to be at the beck and call of the official. His other entrepreneurial pursuits would suffer in the meantime, and for many, the price had to be necessarily high to make it worth their while.

Savage's refusal and Mackay's inability to find any other suitable linguist forced the agent to recognize that he was "Under a necessity of complying with Mr. Barton" and

⁶⁹Patrick Mackay to the Trustees, August 10, 1734, *CRG*, 20:69.

⁷⁰Richard Woodward to Patrick Mackay, August 16, 1734, *CRG*, 20:72.

returned to negotiate. At this point, Barton raised his asking price from £35 to £40 a month. He knew that the market would bare this out because of the rarity of qualified linguists. The trader apparently knew what his linguistic skills were worth to the government, as did the Indian agent, who ultimately agreed to his terms. Mackay was quick to assure his superiors that as Barton had the reputation of being the best interpreter in the land, he was worth the price; regardless, he promised to keep him employed “no longer than I’ve delivered the talk to the Indians.”⁷¹

Securing an interpreter clearly was not easy. Sometimes finding a translator even among the Indians was impossible. In 1760, a group of Cherokee marched English prisoners near the Upper Creek towns, and the Creeks could not communicate with the captors in order to secure their release.⁷² While a variety of people might know the necessary languages, few were trustworthy enough or willing to work for the government for the required length of time. Principal traders, however, often fit the bill. When Woodward was unable to convince Savage to join Mackay, he suggested that the agent’s best chance to “get a much propper man” was to look among the traders in Savannah Town or those already living among the Creeks.⁷³ High-caliber interpreters were rare, but the best hope was to find a resident trader.

⁷¹Patrick Mackay to the Trustees, August 10, 1734, *CRG*, 20:69; Patrick Mackay to James Oglethorpe, Nov. 20, 1734, in *OG*, 1:63.

⁷²Journal of the Proceedings of the Governor and Council, May 20, 1760, *CRG*, 8:308.

⁷³Richard Woodward to Patrick Mackay, August 16, 1734, *CRG*, 20:72.

Traders who doubled as interpreters were essential to the diplomatic mediation that occurred between the Indians and the Georgians, and their presence was required at every official meeting. In the Trustee period, General Oglethorpe had “certain allowances” for both the leaders and the interpreters of the major Indian groups, including the Creeks, Cherokees, and Chickasaws and even the Uchees and Yamacraws. The Board of Trustees, however, was frequently guilty of not including enough money in the provisional yearly budget to account for all the Indian meetings or the interpreters who needed to attend them. Certainly the expense could add up; Oglethorpe estimated that meetings with the Indians cost the government £10 per head for “them [the Indians] and the interpreters bringing them down.”⁷⁴ In the end, understanding the necessity of having qualified linguists, the Trustees always approved the additional expenditures. In the royal period, requests continued to pour in from the governors for more funding for translators, and additional payments to interpreters were made through the annual tax acts and other legislation.⁷⁵

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Because of their language skills, resident traders were highly sought and valued as interpreters. But their fluency coupled with their relationship with the Indians made

⁷⁴James Oglethorpe to the Earl of Egmont, January 25, 1741 in *OG*, 2:539.

⁷⁵James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, December 29, 1739, *CRG*, vol. 22, pt. 2:287; For additional expenditures in the Trustee period, see *EJ*, 90, June 19, 1734; William Stephens to Harman Verelst, July 25, 1749, *CRG*, 25:407; Harman Verelst to the President and Assistants in Georgia, Nov. 25, 1749, *CRG*, 31:174; Harman Verelst to the President and Assistants in Georgia, Dec. 23, 1749, *CRG*, 31:177-178; for the royal period, examples can be found in Tax Act of April 11, 1768, *CRG*, vol. 19, part 1:47 and James Wright to the Board of Trade, July 5, 1769, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 2:329.

them perfect candidates for a whole host of diplomatic endeavors. Georgia officials understood this and frequently sought traders to act on their behalf as diplomatic agents in a variety of ways.

Because officials frequently made use of resident traders as interpreters, they often extended their diplomatic realm by requesting them to relay important messages from the government to the Indians. Traders were frequently asked to deliver talks “into their Nations.”⁷⁶ The traders traveled between the port towns and the Indian villages in their usual course of business. Rather than requiring a colonial or imperial official to make the arduous journey inland either to the capital towns of the Indians or to the many outlying towns, resident traders were given the authority to transmit the official talks on their behalf. They were entrusted to carry out this critical communication to ensure that all the Indians in the empire received the official word.

At the earliest meeting of the Georgia Indians with the king of England in 1734, the visiting Yamacraws were concerned that other Indian nations would not know or accept the discussions that had transpired in England. They therefore requested that since Oglethorpe was not returning with them, the king would send someone “to assure the other nations, that the word they brought from England was all true.” The board answered that interpreter John Musgrove, the Yamacraws’ resident trader, would serve that purpose and “go to all those Nations” upon his return to Georgia.⁷⁷ Musgrove was trusted enough not only to communicate with the immediate Yamacraw Indians, but to

⁷⁶Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Jan. 29, 1761, *CRG*, 8:470.

⁷⁷*EJ*, 63, Sept. 11, 1734.

spread the word to the larger Creek and Cherokee nations. The court apparently had confidence that the trader would be able to accomplish the task with little difficulty and adhere to the strict standards necessitated by intercultural diplomatic negotiations. This level of trust was offered even in light of Musgrove's uncharacteristic drunken lapse. Upon his return to Georgia, he apparently discharged his diplomatic duty proficiently, for there were no complaints from the Yamacraws or British officials.

Although Indian agents and other officials occasionally traveled the trading paths to confer with members of the Indian nations, it was the resident traders who were most often employed to carry the officials' messages. When relations deteriorated after a few renegade Creeks murdered some settlers in 1760, Governor Henry Ellis needed to have a talk with the Creek headmen to ensure that they did not condone the act and that they would help to prosecute the offenders. Ellis was on shaky ground, for he was not certain of the headmen's position, but he needed to address the situation quickly and ensure that the Creeks were still friendly, both for the security of the colony and to appease the families of the murdered settlers in hopes of avoiding further hostilities. He therefore turned to a trusted resident trader to relay the important message. He "thought it expedient to send Mr. Joseph Wright . . . to the nation," hoping to get his message across in a positive fashion without incurring the expense (and risk) of hosting a large Indian delegation in Savannah.⁷⁸ With the trustworthy and respected trader delivering the "talk of [such] import," it was well-received by the Creek headmen, and Governor Ellis

⁷⁸Proceedings of the Governor and Council, June 30, 1760, *CRG*, 8:329-330.

successfully secured their support.⁷⁹ Resident traders had the ability to negotiate these tense moments between the two groups and to effect a mutual understanding before events spiraled out of control. They also had the rare ability to break bad news to the Indians and still have hopes of securing an agreement or positive outcome. For example, resident trader Lachlan McGillivray was the one employed to tell the Creeks of an impending boundary change in 1771. Even at that late date, the governor still found that when he needed to communicate with the Indians, the traders were the best medium through which to do so.⁸⁰ In some instances, only the traders were trusted enough to know which Indian chiefs should receive the diplomatic communiques. As things heated up on the frontier during the approach of the Seven Years' War, Lachlan McGillivray and George Galphin were entrusted with talks from Governor John Reynolds "with Orders to deliver and faithfully interpret the same" to the Gun Merchant of the Upper Creeks and Malatchi of the Lower Creeks, respectively.⁸¹ Both of these traders lived in those respective areas and thus enjoyed established relations with the targeted headmen.

Once the official messages were relayed, the Georgia officials expected replies from the headmen. Once again, resident traders were chosen to fulfill this diplomatic task. Traders frequently carried Indian talks or replies to official communication back to

⁷⁹Proceedings of the Governor and Council, July 28, 1760, *CRG*, 8:348-350; also Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Nov 7, 1760, *CRG*, 8:414 and Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Nov. 8, 1760, *CRG*, 8:417.

⁸⁰Enclosure no. 7, Talk of James Wright June 25, 1771 to Emistesego and the Gun Merchant, Creek Chiefs, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 2:370.

⁸¹Proceedings of the Governor and Council, November 1, 1754, *CRG*, 7:23; Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Jan. 29, 1761, *CRG*, 8:470.

the Georgia officials in Savannah. During the Seven Years' War, trader William Struthers made the trek to Little Tallassee to deliver talks from both Governor Wright of Georgia and Governor William Bull of South Carolina and he returned with the Indians' detailed answers.⁸² Once again, the resident trader was entrusted not only by the Indians who asked him to deliver it, but also by Georgia officials who believed it was true to the intent and nature of the originators. The traders served as much more than just a courier service; it was not just a matter of getting to the other's location but being trustworthy enough to faithfully translate official decisions and to articulate native responses.

During the hostilities that developed between the Georgians and the Cherokees as a result of the Cherokee War, the Creeks hoped to remain neutral, although they accused the Cherokees of trying to draw them into the fray. In 1761, the Creeks sent word to Savannah through Struthers to make sure the governor knew that the Cherokees "want to bring us into their snare by killing your people and talking our language." The talk relayed by the trader assured the officials that the Creeks were not intermingling with the Cherokees and that they would "have no hand in their quarrels."⁸³ The headmen reported that the Creeks were steadfast allies and, despite Cherokee attempts to disturb the peace between the two, they would remain so. The level of gravity in this instance cannot be overstated – if the message had not been successfully transmitted, there could have been dire consequences for both sides.

⁸²Proceedings of the Governor and Council, July 28, 1761, *CRG*, 8:544-545.

⁸³Proceedings of the Governor and Council, July 28, 1761, *CRG*, 8:545.

In some instances, it was not other tribes that caused friction between the Creeks and the Georgians, but renegade members of their own tribe. The traders proved especially useful in negotiating cases where “straggler” Indians had killed white settlers under no authority but their own. In these cases, it was crucial that the Creek headmen disavow any involvement in the affair, but the presence of any Indian in the settlements was too dangerous to risk. By necessity, communications were conducted through the traders at these times. In one instance, a white man was killed within a few miles of trader George Galphin’s cowpen. When the governor demanded that the Indians serve justice by having the murderer executed, the Creek headmen obliged and then employed one of their traders, John Spencer, to let the governor know that the headmen “have fulfilled what you desired.” They expected that the trader could validate their efforts and that the information he relayed to the officials could serve “as a proof of our love & Friendship for the English.” The trader’s role as intermediary allowed necessary information to travel that would allow “the path to be white...from here to you at Savannah.” This instance may have literally hit a little too close to home for Galphin’s liking, since the Creeks relied on another trader to relay their message. But the Indians were equally concerned that Galphin approve of their actions, reasserting that they hoped the path to his outpost would “be white” as well.⁸⁴ The Creek headmen believed it to be as important to smooth things over with Galphin, one of the most influential resident traders at that time, as it was to amend things with the governor.

⁸⁴Proceedings and Minutes of the Governor and Council, April 20, 1772, *CRG*, 12:316. See also Proceedings and Minutes of the Governor and Council, Dec. 9, 1771, *CRG*, 12:148, 152.

Another random murder of a white settler in 1764 caused Creek headmen to become concerned about the political repercussions. This time, the Young Twin of Coweta enlisted Galphin himself to ensure that the Indians' message reached the colonial governor.⁸⁵ When the Choctaws decided to reach out to the British in 1759 and to pursue trading possibilities with them in addition to the French, they sent Indian trader John Spencer, who typically worked among the Creeks, ahead of them to prepare the way. When he met with the governor on their behalf, he did not arrive empty-handed. He "presented his Excellency a white Wing together with a Written Talk from Ebitapogola-Mingo, one of the principal Head Kings of the Choctaw nation of Indians."⁸⁶ Even though Spencer lived and worked among a neighboring tribe, the Choctaws had no resident Georgia trader of their own, and they knew they needed to employ a trader to open the way, to instigate talks and negotiations with these new allies, and to make sure that the Georgians knew they were coming in peace.

Although the traders were always available to relay official communications, sometimes Georgia officials needed to meet directly with Indian leaders. When a colonial official wished to summon the Indians for an official meeting in Savannah, the traders served another vital diplomatic purpose. The traders were already traveling around the territories to deliver messages and talks between the Indians and the officials, they were already employed to interpret and explain the talks, and they were almost

⁸⁵Journal of the Commons House of Assembly, Feb.15, 1764, *CRG*, 14:119.

⁸⁶Journal of the Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Nov, 9, 1759, *CRG*, 8:187.

exclusively the only people to issue formal invitations to respective chiefs or groups of Indians to come to Savannah and meet with the Trustees' officials or the royal governors.⁸⁷ After representatives from two of the nine Lower Creek towns ventured to Savannah of their own accord to speak with officials in 1749, the Board requested that trader and interpreter John Kinnard travel to the remaining seven towns, extend an invitation for the headmen to come to Savannah, and accompany them on their way down.⁸⁸

Issuing invitations among fast friends was easy enough, but sometimes relations were uncertain and native cooperation was not a foregone conclusion. When careful diplomacy was really needed to convince the Indians to travel to a political meeting, the traders were often the only ones who could persuade the Indians to agree. For example, during the Seven Years' War, the British became seriously concerned over the neutrality of their Creek neighbors. The French had been actively courting the Creeks, and, in the previous years, a small but vocal pro-French contingent had developed among them.⁸⁹ Governor Henry Ellis felt that a meeting with the Creek headmen and disbursements of presents would "remove the ill impressions they are said to entertain of the English." To that end, the governor sent Joseph Wright to their nation to invite the Indians to Savannah on behalf of the government. As a resident trader and noted interpreter, Wright was "a

⁸⁷Proceedings of the President, Sept. 16, 1749, *CRG*, 6:295; Journal of the Proceedings of the Governor and Council, July 17, 1760, *CRG*, 8:346; President and Assistants to Harman Verelst, Jan. 18, 1749, *CRG*, 25:460.

⁸⁸Proceedings of the President, August 31, 1749, *CRG*, 6:287.

⁸⁹Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 175-76.

person Confessedly well Qualified both as to his knowledge of the Indian Language and the Present Disposition of those Savages.” He, like other resident traders, had lived among his customers for many years, and the governor knew that Wright had a close perspective not only on the Indians, but on the current circumstances surrounding their relations with both the British and the French. Wright was aware of the French inroads with the Creeks; he was aware that both the Shawnees and Cherokees were incensed with the British and trying their best to discourage the affinity between them and the Creeks, and he knew that the Creeks had been dissatisfied the last time they had been called to meet Georgia officials when they had encountered less than diplomatic treatment while they were there. Because he understood the context of the relations with the Indians that had gone on before, Wright “had an Intimation of the many obstructions he had to combat” in order to persuade the Creeks to meet with Ellis. But he also had the ability and the wherewithal to successfully convince the Creeks to agree to travel to Savannah to meet with the governor.⁹⁰

In another instance, the Lower Creeks were hesitant to travel to Savannah because some of their chiefs worried that the British were setting a trap for them. Only their trusted interpreter and resident trader, John Kinnard, was able to convince them that the rumors were false, and they chose to believe him over other native Creeks. Officials in Savannah were pleased to hear that Kinnard was successful in convincing the Indians to come down, but they worried that “his talk had such Influence” that it would exacerbate

⁹⁰Proceedings of the Governor and Council, October 25, 1757, *CRG*, 7:643.

the factions and some fallout might occur.⁹¹ Clearly, these headmen had strong confidence in Kinnard, and many Indians felt similarly about their own resident traders.

Having a large delegation of Indians descending on the capital town would certainly necessitate some warning as to their status and, especially if they had not been purposely invited down, their motivation; usually the traders alerted the officials when the Indians were on the move, and often they went a step further and escorted the Indians to town. Allied Indians could move a bit more freely and expect a warmer reception in town, but the reality of the threat posed by any Indian coupled with the settlers' inability to distinguish friend from foe often necessitated an official escort. Since many traders were already employed as interpreters or issuing formal invitations, they often doubled as official escorts. They were expected not only to relay the message, but to ensure the safe passage and arrival of the Indians.⁹²

When Georgia began to make inroads into the Choctaw trade in the mid-1730s, trader Thomas Jones was ever-present to coordinate the negotiations. He ventured to the Creek Nation first, and asked some of the Upper Creek headmen to go with him to the Choctaws to make peace. A Creek headman named the Dog King and Jones worked in tandem to persuade the Choctaws "to come down" to Savannah to meet with Georgia officials and to establish trade relations and a military alliance. Initially, the Trustees' invitation had reached only a few of the Choctaw towns' headmen, but Jones persisted in

⁹¹Proceedings of the President, Sept. 16, 1749, *CRG*, 6:295-296; President and Assistants to Harman Verelst, Jan. 18, 1750, *CRG*, 25:461-462.

⁹²See Journal of the Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Nov. 13, 1760, *CRG*, 8:422 for example.

spreading the word and eventually “they all gave their consents for their coming.” In June 1734, he escorted the Choctaw headmen to Georgia, resulting in nearly a month-long stay at the Musgrove’s trading post, a productive meeting with the Georgia officials, and an invitation to meet with the South Carolina governor.⁹³

Sometimes different resident traders were employed for different functions, especially if one was already in town with the official and the other was among the Indians. For example, one diplomatic meeting had the presence of three different leading resident traders from among the Creeks – Joseph Wright from the Lower Creeks served as interpreter, but both Moses Nunes and Lachlan McGillivray were also present. The latter two both lived among the Upper Creeks and most likely had escorted members of the Indian delegation to Savannah.⁹⁴

Resident traders from the farther away and less predictable nations could also escort Indians to town on a variety of different errands. It was often for negotiations, as when Jacob Morris, an Indian trader who lived among the Cherokees, “brought down with him out of that Nation twelve Men” in 1740.⁹⁵ Sometimes the traders had a hand in influencing military affairs, recruiting allies, and escorting them to the army officers to put them in play. When war threatened in 1739, Oglethorpe “promised to pay the Indian traders for raising the Indians to preserve the province.” Officials clearly expected that

⁹³Mary Musgrove to James Oglethorpe, July 17, 1734, in *OG*, 1:44; Isaac Chardon to James Oglethorpe, Aug. 1, 1734, in *OG*, 1:46; Thomas Causton to James Oglethorpe, July 7, 1735, in *OG*, 1:216.

⁹⁴Journal of the Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Nov. 21, 1760, *CRG*, 8:427.

⁹⁵Journal Entry of William Stephens, June 2, 1740, *CRG*, 4:585.

the traders would use their influence “to engage them [the Indians] to Act offensively against his Majesty’s Enemies” and hoped they would deliver the recruits for battle.⁹⁶ Williams Stephens was advised in 1740 that trader Thomas Holmes “was coming down with a certain Number of Indians, and twenty white Men . . . to go on immediate Service under the General” against the Spanish. Years later when British-Cherokee relations deteriorated in 1760, Governor Ellis said “he would write to Mr. McGillivray at Augusta to use his Influence with the [Creek] Indians there to go out with them that they might make a strong party.”⁹⁷

Escorting Indian delegations or military allies often consumed several days up to several weeks, depending on the distance traveled, and the escorts needed to maintain a good disposition with the Indians during this time. Because of the length of the journey, the travelers frequently stopped at other traders’ posts along the way for rest and refreshment.⁹⁸ Both the traders escorting the Indians as well as those who hosted them along the way were expected to be good-will ambassadors to the Indians. Agents were advised “to shew particular marks of esteem to the Indians” and to ensure that they remained “very cheerful and well-satisfied” while on their diplomatic mission.⁹⁹ To that

⁹⁶James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, Oct. 5, 1739, *CRG*, vol. 22, pt. 2:219; *CRG*, 7:612, July 21, 1757.

⁹⁷Journal Entry of William Stephens, April 12, 1740, *CRG*, 4:552; Journal of the Proceedings of the Governor and Council, May 2, 1760, *CRG*, 8:295.

⁹⁸Journal Entry of William Stephens, April 12, 1740, *CRG*, 4:552; Journal entry of June 8, 1742, *JWS*, 1:91. For stopovers at traders’ homes, see *CRG*, 4:585, June 2, 1740; Mary Musgrove to James Oglethorpe, July 17, 1734, in *OG*, 1:44 for examples.

⁹⁹President and Assistants to Harman Verelst, January 18, 1750, *CRG*, 25:463.

end, officials requested that the traders “amuse them” or “give them some small entertainment to humour them” and reimbursed the traders well for the concomitant expenses.¹⁰⁰ Resident traders were specifically chosen “to cultivate a good Understanding,” and when relations between the Indians and the Georgians were not going as well as hoped, specific principal traders were chosen “in order to efface any bad Impressions they [the Indians] may have received.”¹⁰¹

Without the traders to escort these delegations to their proper destinations and to make proper introductions for them, chaos could have reigned. Traders played a significant role in keeping the lines of diplomatic communication open between the two groups. As respected members of both cultures, they were capable of relaying talks between the two, issuing invitations and assuring acceptance of them, and returning answers or escorting the Indians themselves, all the while being able to keep the natives in good humor and to represent the Georgia government in a positive light. Both sides understood the necessity of having “a proper conductor”¹⁰² for the Indians, and the resident traders were trusted by both sides to carry out the mission.

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In addition to these diplomatic measures, traders were also the main source from whom officials gathered intelligence about the natives. Because principal traders lived

¹⁰⁰*CRG*, 4:204, Sept. 21, 1738; Proceedings of the President, July 27, 1749, *CRG*, 6:256; President and Assistants to Harman Verelst, Jan. 18, 1750, *CRG*, 25:463.

¹⁰¹Proceedings of the President, Sept.16, 1749, *CRG*, 6:295; President and Assistants to Harman Verelst, Jan.18, 1750, *CRG*, 25:460; Proceedings of the President, July 27, 1749, *CRG*, 6:256.

¹⁰²*JWS*, 1:91, June 8, 1742.

among the Indians and were so intimately involved with them, they knew better than anyone the status of affairs within the Indian nations. They knew not only the events and the people but the general mood and disposition of the Indians and their attitudes towards the competing Europeans. The wealth of information at their disposal allowed them to be the preeminent informants, most often because they were eyewitnesses who could offer first-hand accounts of what was going on in the distant territory. But sometimes they were purposely employed to invoke a little subterfuge and to keep a close eye on their native neighbors.

With the wealth of information that traders could accumulate, they were also frequently the means by which to disburse it proficiently. Although rarely perfect in their spelling and grammar, many of the resident traders were literate. Those who were not could usually find someone who could commit their information to paper. The letters they sent to officials and to their suppliers provided the majority of intelligence garnered out of the Indian nations. In addition, they were a particularly mobile group, so they could spread information verbally as they crisscrossed the colony from Indian towns to colonial ports and back again. This oral transmission occurred frequently when they came to town to renew their licenses and met with officials to inform them on the status of the Indian nations. Furthermore, the traders were also the major means of conveying letters and official dispatches to and from the Indian frontiers, whether their own or those penned by others traders, frontier military officers, or imperial officials. As they traveled

over land and rivers, traders were one of the few consistently reliable means of spreading information.¹⁰³

The route the traders followed frequently brought them in from the Indian nations, stopping over at the frontier trading towns such as Augusta and New Windsor, and then on to the coastal port towns of Charles Town and Savannah before heading back out again. When those hoping to correspond with others in far-off places found anyone heading to the recipients' locale, they were quick to jump on the opportunity. As one example, one Mr. Andrews, who traded among the Chickasaws, came to Savannah via Augusta and brought with him letters to Thomas Causton, a Savannah magistrate and the Trustees' storekeeper, and to Secretary William Stephens from all the locales through which he had passed.¹⁰⁴

In their wide-ranging travels, traders served as the major courier service in the colonial Southeast. Officials frequently made use of the traders as they went on their way, entrusting them with correspondence or official documentation of the highest importance. Many traders began their circular route in the Indian nations and could bring letters from the frontier as well as from various white settlements through which they passed. When an Indian trading boat that was headed from New Windsor to Charles Town stopped in port at Savannah, the trader who was "well-known to Mr. Causton" took charge of Causton's and Stephens' letters, "promising they would be safely

¹⁰³For examples, see *CRG*, 4:325, March 29, 1739; *CRG*, 4:362, June 26, 1739; *CRG*, 4:552, April 12, 1740; *CRG*, 4:568, May 7, 1740; *CRG*, vol. 4, pt. 2:81, Feb. 2, 1741; *JWS*, 2:91, April 8, 1744.

¹⁰⁴*CRG*, 4:197, Sept. 9, 1738; *CRG*, 4:133, April 24, 1738.

delivered.” Probable recipients in this case included traders among the Indian nations, merchant traders along the coast, the governor in Charles Town, and the Trustees themselves back in England.¹⁰⁵ Secretary Stephens had no qualms about entrusting the traders heading to Charles Town and elsewhere with important and official documentation; in July 1743, he entrusted a trader with the entire “packett that I had prepared for the Trust.”¹⁰⁶ Trader Ambrose Morrison arrived in Savannah on August 5, 1742 “with letters out of the Creek Nation” to Stephens and other Savannah officials. But before the weary trader could rest from his journey, he continued on, this time restocked with letters from Stephens to General Oglethorpe who was at that time based near Frederica.¹⁰⁷ Two weeks later, Morrison returned and stopped in Savannah on his way back to the Creek territory. This time, he disappointed Stephens when he showed up empty-handed, but he was able to verbally relay news regarding the health of the troops under Oglethorpe’s command.¹⁰⁸ On the many occasions when Mary Matthews ventured to meet Oglethorpe to interpret for his allied Indian troops, she was entrusted with various letters and dispatches to bring to the general.¹⁰⁹ When, on one occasion, she left to meet him too quickly, Stephens followed up by sending his letters along with a

¹⁰⁵*CRG*, 4:186, Aug. 17, 1738.

¹⁰⁶*JWS*, 1:230, July 23, 1743.

¹⁰⁷*JWS*, 1:116, Aug. 5, 1742.

¹⁰⁸*JWS*, 1:121, Aug. 18, 1742.

¹⁰⁹*CRG*, vol. 4, pt. 2:104, March 13, 1741.

Cherokee trader heading down to see Oglethorpe.¹¹⁰ On another occasion, Morrison arrived with a letter regarding a possible outbreak of hostilities in Cherokee country. Stephens wrote to General Oglethorpe and enclosed the original letter, and sent the trader on later that evening in an attempt to overtake the general and alert him to the news.¹¹¹

An early transmission from Samuel Eveleigh, a merchant trader in Charles Town who supplied many of the resident traders in Georgia, shows how diplomatic information funneled in from the traders to those high-ranking in the government. In one letter to Oglethorpe, he was able to transmit information on the events and dispositions of two of the major Indian groups affecting Georgia, the Creeks and the Cherokees, because resident traders from each of those nations had lately come to town to resupply. All was “very peaceable and quiet” with the Creeks, but the Cherokees were causing problems. Samuel Brown and other Indian traders who resided among the Cherokees were able to report not only on the current disposition of those Indians, claiming they “were very insolent and threate[ning],” but also to supply the specific details of the events that supported their assertion.¹¹²

The traders had their finger on the pulse of their Indian neighbors when few other people would have had any idea of the natives’ mood. Thus they supplied crucial information, either in person or through their letters, on their current disposition. When rumors of Patrick Mackay’s impending journey into the Creek Nation made the Indians

¹¹⁰*CRG*, 4:463, Dec 3, 1739.

¹¹¹*CRG*, 4:375, July 23, 1739.

¹¹²Extract of a Memorial of the South Carolina Assembly to the King, April 9, 1734, *CRG*, 20:55-57.

frantic with concerns of many people and cattle coming with him and the building of so many forts “so fast, they must expect to be destroyed soon,” it was the resident trader Mr. Wood who reported how the headmen had reacted when finding out about Mackay’s mission. This allowed Thomas Causton time to contact Tomochichi and have him “send people up to pacify them” and explain what the realities of Mackay’s diplomatic trip entailed.¹¹³

William Stephens understood the valuable information traders could supply just in relation to the natives’ dispositions and frequently checked with them to ascertain the status quo. In August 1744, he called together a handful of resident traders who were in town to renew their licenses to meet with him and the magistrates, “the better to be informed in what posture Affairs stood among the Indians.”¹¹⁴ When traders were enlisted by the government to issue invitations or to escort Indians to town, it was understood that the officers would have an ally capable of ascertaining the general mood of the natives. The government knew to employ a resident trader, “from whom it’s expected, the Disposition of the generality of the Indians may be discovered.”¹¹⁵ When Joseph Wright was employed in 1757 to persuade the Creek headmen to agree to talks, it was on account of his being “well qualified...in his knowledge of the present disposition of those Savages.”¹¹⁶

¹¹³Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Jan. 20, 1735, *CRG*, 21:70.

¹¹⁴*JWS*, 2:133, Aug. 10, 1744.

¹¹⁵Proceedings of the President, Aug. 31, 1749, *CRG*, 6:287.

¹¹⁶Proceedings of Governor and Council, Oct. 25, 1757, *CRG*, 7:643.

The traders reaffirmed good news when relations were going well, reporting that one group was “in a very good disposition, and hearty toward us” and another was “very well pleased with the presents made them.”¹¹⁷ Even if there was nothing extraordinary to report, it meant that the traders knew all was well.¹¹⁸ But when problems did arise, the traders were the first to warn the government that trouble was brewing.

As war with Spain loomed in 1740, Oglethorpe fully expected a large contingent of his Creek allies to be by his side. The traders were the first to alert the officials that there was some indecisiveness in the nation and that the allies might not materialize in the numbers Oglethorpe had hoped. William Stephens, at a loss as to what to tell the general, looked to the traders for more information “relating to the present dubious state and disposition of those Indians.” Resident traders such as Eleazer Wiggan were the only ones who could put this turn of events into context: Mico Chigilly had been telling his people that they had no business getting involved in white men’s quarrels and had recently exhibited “an unusual coldness” towards any involvement in the Spanish conflict.¹¹⁹ The resident traders were also a knowledgeable source on native interrelations and were keenly aware of how those affected British-Indian relations. They knew which groups were at war, why they were fighting, how strong alliances were, who was courting for various allies, and how successful their inroads were proving

¹¹⁷William Stephens, Aug. 9, 1738, *CRG*, 4:181; Samuel Eveleigh to James Oglethorpe, Oct. 19, 1734, in *OG*, 1:59.

¹¹⁸*JWS*, 2:7, Aug. 23, 1743.

¹¹⁹*CRG*, 4:181, Aug. 9, 1738; *CRG*, 4:568, May 7, 1740.

to be.¹²⁰ Traders also reminded officials not to favor one group over the other or else risk insulting the slighted one. In 1752, they reported grumblings among their Creek customers that, despite the Cherokees' outrages against the British, the Georgians had been very lenient with them; the Creeks believed that if they had committed such atrocities, the repercussions for them would have been swifter and more severe. The resident traders cautioned officials that this double standard made the Creeks very uneasy.¹²¹

At times like this when relations were unsettled, it was often up to the traders to patch things up and bring the Indians back into the fold. Colonial officials hoped the traders could be persuasive with their Indian friends and steer them towards a line of thought that coincided with British aims. Because of their connections with the natives, resident traders could prove very convincing and were often instrumental in securing Indian approval of a variety of diplomatic designs. At times, they were asked to help persuade the Indians into agreeing to new boundaries or land cessions, and they were deemed acceptable witnesses to such documents as well.¹²² Even when specific headmen balked at undertaking the long journey or at the general idea of negotiating with the British, resident traders used their influence to secure the desired

¹²⁰For just a few examples of many, see *JWS*, 3:7, Aug. 23, 1743; Samuel Eveleigh to James Oglethorpe, May 7, 1734, *CRG* 20:78; *CRG*, 4:156, June 12, 1738; Proceedings of the Governor and Council, November 1, 1754, *CRG*, 7:19.

¹²¹Extract of a Letter from the Assistants in Georgia to Mr. Martin, July 28, 1752, *CRG*, 26:406.

¹²²Extract from the Proceedings of the President and Assistants in Georgia, July 28, 1752, *CRG*, 26:389; Statutes 1768-1773, *CRG*, vol. 19, pt. 1:123.

diplomatic end.¹²³ When problems broke out because one British subject began to have too much influence with a renegade faction of the Creeks for the officials' liking, the first step was to "procure a good interpreter to convince the Indians that they are grossly imposed upon." In addition, the trader employed for that purpose, John Kinnard, also had to convince the Creeks that the Englishman was a "self-interested and designing man" and his ally, one of their relatives, a chief named Malatchi, was spreading false rumors that the whites hoped to declare war on them.¹²⁴ In this instance, the trader was able to negate the arguments of other Indian headmen, in effect dividing the loyalties and forcing natives to choose sides. None of the southeastern tribes was a cohesive group that followed an absolute leader; there were always factions, discrepancies, and differences of opinion. But the fact that the traders were trusted members of society who were allowed to be part of the discussion and had some influence, or that their word could be taken over a native's, is noteworthy. After much discussion, Kinnard was able to convince the Indians that "what Malatchi had said in the Nations was Lies" and accomplished the task of bringing them to Savannah.¹²⁵ Because this was "a very

¹²³President and Assistants to Harman Verelst, January 18, 1749, *CRG*, 25:460; Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Oct. 25, 1757, *CRG*, 7:643.

¹²⁴Proceedings of the President, Sept. 16, 1749, *CRG*, 6:296; President and Assistants to Harman Verelst, Jan. 18, 1749, *CRG*, 25:461; President and Assistants to Benjamin Martyn, July 25, 1749, *CRG*, 25:410; By-laws and laws, Nov. 16, 1749, *CRG*, 1:537.

¹²⁵President and Assistants to Harman Verelst, Jan. 18, 1749, *CRG*, 25:463; Proceedings of the President, Sept. 16, 1749, *CRG*, 6:295-296; President and Assistants to Harman Verelst, Jan. 18, 1749, *CRG*, 25:460.

necessary step”, the Trustees approved of the hiring of Kinnard for the task and the £100 bill for his salary and entertainment of the Indians “has been accepted and paid.”¹²⁶

As if the traders did not have enough official tasks to accomplish, their diplomatic missions had one final purpose: to spy on the Indians and to ascertain their hopes, motives, and ammunition. The idea was that the government would have someone with an inside track who could supply them further information. Officials needed to have traders as contacts among the Indians so that the natives’ “disposition may be discovered.” When relations were not on a sure footing, traders could “Penetrate their designs” and “give us further light into these dark purposes of the Indians.”¹²⁷ Having trusted informants among the natives was crucial to intercultural relations, and officials took full advantage. They expected that “those Traders of the best Note who lived near” the Indians would keep “a watchfull Eye ypon them.”¹²⁸

When things went horribly wrong and resulted in crisis proportions, the traders were once again the stable group that could act as intermediaries, offer the voice of reason, talk to the headmen, and enact a suitable response. When settlers wound up dead at the hands of renegade Indians who were not sanctioned by the majority of the headmen, traders carefully negotiated the uncertain terrain to speak with the native leaders and insure that satisfaction would be forthcoming. The influence that the traders

¹²⁶Benjamin Martyn to the President and Assistants in Georgia, Nov. 24, 1749, *CRG*, 31:164.

¹²⁷Journal of the Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Nov. 13, 1760, *CRG*, 8:422; Proceedings of the President, July 27, 1749, *CRG*, 6:257; Proceedings of the President, Aug. 31, 1749, *CRG*, 6:287; *JWS* 2:234, Aug. 1, 1745.

¹²⁸*JWS*, 2:91, April 8, 1744.

had was often so great that they alone were the ones endeavoring to set things right. Rather than waiting to simply relay official requests, the most influential resident traders often took matters into their own hands. George Galphin frequently advised the Indians on a proper diplomatic course of action and often did not take the time to ask officials their opinions first. He had no reservations about speaking as the official representative of the government. During one crisis of serious proportions, Galphin discovered that a white settler had been killed by a Creek Indian named Sugley and immediately wrote a formal letter to the Creek headmen. He outlined the particulars of the murder and the subsequent chase in which he was involved, but the crux of the communication centered on justice and the necessary steps to restore positive diplomatic relations with the Georgians. Galphin told the headmen that he had to acquaint the governor with the circumstances, but that he would also let him know that the trader had already communicated with the headmen regarding the situation and would put in a good word for them that they are “all good men and well wishers to your county” and thus would do all in their power to rectify the situation immediately. To that end, Galphin ordered that the headmen would “soon send me a Talk for the Governor that the Murderer is killed;” as soon as Galphin could relay that information to the governor, “everything maybe Straight again.”

Galphin also chastised the headmen for not keeping their warriors out of the settlements, a warning which he had repeatedly made, and fumed that “If you had taken

notice of the talks I have sent you, none of this Trouble would have happened to you.”¹²⁹

In his lecture, Galphin seemed a bit full of himself, even more so when it is considered that the governor did not yet know that a murder had taken place, but as an influential resident trader, he had the right to be. He had secured a position of respect among both the Indian and colonial leaders and could presume to know what was best for the relations between the two.

In crisis situations such as this, resident traders worked hard to keep both Indians and settlers safe, to prevent things from spiraling out of control, and to effect a quick and fair resolution. Traders warned their neighboring Indians not to travel into certain territories until the crisis had been averted, and Indians trusted the traders to let them know when things were safe again. In addition, resident traders helped to negotiate the punishment and even verified that it was carried out. The Creek perpetrator, once captured, was put to death “in presence of several of the traders” and the Indians fully expected that the traders’ account of the proceedings would verify that “there is a full satisfaction given without any dispute.”¹³⁰ Few other representatives of colonial government would have been able to accomplish such delicate diplomatic tasks.

The resident traders served to mediate diplomatic relations between the Indians and the Georgians in a variety of important ways. Many of them were critical to

¹²⁹Journal of the Proceedings of the Governor and Council, June 30, 1760, *CRG*, 8:329; Proceedings and Minutes of the Governor and Council, Dec. 9, 1771, *CRG*, 12:149-152.

¹³⁰Proceedings and Minutes of the Governor and Council, April 20, 1772, *CRG*, 12:316.

interrelations for decades. Two of the best known traders, Lachlan McGillivray and George Galphin, functioned on the frontier from the 1750s into the 1780s. But there were other individuals who served this purpose for decades squarely within the colonial period. The son of a Sephardic Jewish immigrant, Moses Nunes was a trader in the Upper Creek town of Tuckabatchee. He was a trusted interpreter for the colonial governments for at least twenty years, and his level of skill, his relations with the Indians, and the demand for his services indicates that he was a trader among them for a period much longer than that. By 1750, he was relaying information regarding the movement of Indians and the atmosphere within Tuckabatchee to Williams Stephens, and in 1752, he was called upon twice to testify regarding action in the Indian country.¹³¹ In 1756, he was party to a petition sent from the “Inhabitants at Augusta” voicing concern that the French were making significant inroads to win over the Creeks. A few months later, he and his partner were given “thirty-one horse loads” of presents to take to the Indians to counter the French success.¹³² He attended meetings with the Creeks upon their return from serving as English allies against the Cherokees in April and in November 1760, working alongside other notable traders such as Mary Musgrove and Lachlan McGillivray. When a dispute over payment to an Indian for services arose in 1766, the

¹³¹William Stephens and assistants to Benjamin Martin, July 29, 1750, *CRG*, 26:42; Appendix to the Journal of Thomas Bosomworth, January, 1753, in *DRIA*, 1:329; Affidavit of Moses Nunes, November 9, 1752, in *DRIA*, 1:337.

¹³²Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Aug. 30, 1756, *CRG*, 7:400; Daniel Pepper to Governor Lyttelton, Nov. 30, 1756, in *DRIA*, 2:95; Daniel Pepper to Governor Lyttelton, March 30, 1757, in *DRIA*, 2:356.

governor called upon Nunes as a witness to the original deal which forced the just compensation.¹³³

In 1767, after the signing of the treaty of Augusta, a land dispute arose before the boundary had officially been marked. According to the Indians, Europeans were settling on land that had not been ceded; if they “did not remove from off their Grounds,” the Indians threatened to “take their horses and cattle and kill the inhabitants.” Governor James Wright immediately looked to Nunes to solve the problem; the trader, accompanied by ten militiamen and an officer, was requested to travel to the hotspot and calm the Indians. He was to let them know that the line would be run soon and that at that time, any interlopers would be removed. But Nunes was to strongly caution the Indians not to take matters into their own hands.¹³⁴ The crisis was averted, and while the ten militiamen clearly added to Nunes’ strength, he was no doubt particularly persuasive on his own accord. A few years later, the Board of Trade requested his help in encouraging Indians to hunt for and return fugitive slaves. After years of service, Governor Wright requested approval of an annual salary to be paid to Nunes as interpreter, who had “never had any salary or allowance from the Government” despite his many years of “discharg[ing] that very Troublesome office and duty faithfully and to my satisfaction.” He was certain the Board of Trade would approve the charge and allow

¹³³Journal of the Proceedings of the Governor and Council, April 17, 1760, *CRG*, 8:285; Journal of the Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Nov. 21, 1760, *CRG*, 8:427; Journal of the Upper House of Assembly, Jan. 17, 1766, *CRG*, 17:247.

¹³⁴Proceedings and Minutes of the Governor and Council, Oct. 6, 1767, *CRG*, 10:332.

it to continue annually, “it being for a Service of the Utmost consequence and Indispensably Necessary.”¹³⁵

Nunes was one of many resident traders who spent their lives living and working among the natives, and his service exemplifies the many ways in which resident traders were crucial to mediating Indian-white relations on the frontier. They established a unique personal relationship with the Indians, one of friendship and trust that provided the basis for intercultural understanding and negotiation. They understood the language and the culture of both the Georgians and the natives, and they were trusted by both sides to broker relations between the two. They relayed communication, issued invitations, and served as diplomatic escorts. They were the best source of knowledge and intelligence about groups that seemed foreign, and both Indian and colonial leaders depended on them, their word, and their advice, making them the preeminent cultural brokers operating on the Georgia frontier.

¹³⁵Proceedings and Minutes of the Governor and Council, Dec. 4, 1771, *CRG*, 12:146; James Wright to the Board of Trade, July 5, 1769, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 2:329.

CHAPTER 2

Native Bridges: Indians as Facilitators

As Oglethorpe made preparations for the new settlement of Savannah in 1732, he knew that the survival and success of his colony depended largely on the natives. Most of the other original colonies had been plagued by problems in Indian relations from the outset, and Oglethorpe intended his colony to be different in this respect, as in so many others. The careful selection of the site for Savannah ensured that there were no Indian groups in the immediate vicinity, yet afforded the colonists close proximity to two locales with important native intermediaries: an Indian trading post run by John and Mary Musgrove and, a bit further away, a village of Yamacraw Indians led by Chief Tomochichi. At Savannah's founding in February 1733, both the Musgroves and Chief Tomochichi were present to officially welcome the new colonists.¹

Oglethorpe recognized the powerful position and influence that both Mary and Tomochichi could wield. He made it a point to befriend both of these native intermediaries, frequently consulting with them and heeding their advice.² Tomochichi and Oglethorpe developed a very close friendship, had respect for each other, and often

¹*JPG*, 35-36.

²Phinizy Spalding, *Oglethorpe in America: the Story of Georgia's Founding Father* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1984), 77.

spent time together.³ Most likely the son of a Yamacsee father and a Creek mother, Tomochichi had strong connections to the Creek confederacy, despite his choosing to live outside of their immediate jurisdiction.⁴ Mary was Oglethorpe's primary interpreter for the first ten years of the colony as well as his trusted advisor. As a half-Creek Indian, she enjoyed close kinship ties with some of the major Creek leaders, including Emperor Brims, and consequently wielded much influence in the Creek nation. After the founding of Savannah, both Mary and Tomochichi sent word to their relations within the Creek nation to come down to the coast, meet with Oglethorpe, and negotiate an alliance with the new colony.

The Creeks entered into the first of many alliances with the Georgians in May 1733 and would remain their allies throughout most of the colonial period. There were some exceptions, however, because the Creeks, like all southeastern tribes, enjoyed the central position of being geographically positioned between the French, the Spanish, and the British and frequently played one European nation against the other. (See Map 1.) But the British could depend on the Creeks, the "mortal enemies to the Spaniards," more than they could any other Indian nation.⁵ The Cherokees and the Chickasaws could usually be expected to favor the British, although with less consistency than did the

³Julie A. Sweet, *Negotiating for Georgia: British Creek Relations in the Trustee Era, 1733-1752* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2005), 30.

⁴For more information on Tomochichi's "banishment" and his connections to the larger Creek confederacy, see Helen Todd, *Tomochichi: Indian Friend of the Georgia Colony* (Atlanta, GA: Cherokee Publishing Company, 1977), esp. ch. 2, and Sweet, *Negotiating for Georgia*, esp. 20-23.

⁵*EJ*, 219, Dec. 1, 1736.

[Map pulled in accordance with copyright laws.]

Map 1. Southeastern North America on the Eve of the Colonization of Georgia

Creeks. The most distant nation in the Southeast, the Choctaws, were reliably French allies during the colonial period. Rounding out the list of Georgia's native neighbors were those to the South, collectively known as the "Spanish Indians." These natives were most likely regroupings of Yamassee and other remnants of Florida natives and could not be viewed as friendly to the new Georgia colony.

The closest Indian neighbors, the Yamacraws under the leadership of Tomochichi, were always Georgia's staunchest Indian allies. Located within fifty miles of Savannah, they "live in great friendship with our people," Oglethorpe proclaimed, "as we do with them."⁶ The alliance was cemented when Oglethorpe invited the headmen of the Yamacraws to return to England with him in 1734. Tomochichi and eight other Indians, including his wife Senauki and his nephew and heir Toonahowi, spent over four months in Great Britain, touring cities and meeting with dignitaries.⁷ Once Tomochichi had established his importance as a liaison between the Georgia settlers and the Creek Indians, he did everything in his power to aid the new colony.

Having distanced themselves from the Creek confederacy, the Yamacraw band is what anthropologist Charles Hudson has called a group of "traders' Indians." These Indians enjoyed less autonomy than did the larger "Nations" such as the Creeks, Cherokees, and Chickasaws, living in closer proximity to white settlements and

⁶*EJ*, 44, Feb. 2, 1734.

⁷For a quick synopsis of the trip's events, see David H. Corkran, *The Creek Frontier, 1540-1783* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 85-89.

frequently more dependent upon them.⁸ Another example of the “traders’ Indians” was the small band of Chickasaws and Yuchis who relocated to the outskirts of Augusta in 1737.

In addition to the larger Indian nations and the somewhat less autonomous traders’ Indians, the Georgia colony also had among its population “settlement Indians.” These natives lived in the immediate proximity to white homesteads and towns, usually as individuals or small family units.⁹

Due to proximity and dependence, the settlement and traders’ Indians certainly had more direct interaction with the colonists of Georgia than did those of the larger nations, but in the colonial period, the involvement of Georgia with all southeastern natives was surprisingly complex. With the different cultures avidly working to find ways to coexist in the Southeast, natives were an integral part of negotiating cultural exchange. Indians frequently interacted with whites, whether through spontaneous, chance occurrences as they crossed paths or through more deliberate encounters such as trade. The natives frequently provided food, knowledge, and information to the struggling colonists. They also offered their services, acting as guides, trackers, and interpreters. Like the traders, they were an important source of relaying various diplomatic communication, and, of course, were invaluable as allies.

⁸Charles M. Hudson, “The Genesis of Georgia’s Indians,” in Harvey H. Jackson and Phinizy Spalding, eds., *Forty Years of Diversity* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1984), 41.

⁹*Ibid.*, 42.

Natives would choose to ally themselves with the British or not depending on a host of conditions, not just the advancement of fortuitous cultural relations. In addition, it was not uncommon for different factions to develop among the nations; obtaining a consensus on which European power to support or which action to take was seldom a foregone conclusion. Most of the time Georgia's closest native neighbors favored the British, but not always, and a decision was rarely unanimous. Military alliances between the natives and the Europeans were forged for myriad political, social, and economic reasons outside the scope of this study. Therefore, the project will instead focus on occurrences where their alliance brought them in close contact with each other, whether on or off the battlefield, and served to mediate cultural interrelations. As allies and cultural mediators, the natives proved invaluable as scouts, spies, and mercenaries.

From the beginning, Georgia policymakers were clearly aware of the importance in securing the natives' amity, and Oglethorpe himself was especially concerned about cultivating the proper relationship. He made sure that Georgia's Indian policy was carefully crafted to encourage alliances with all the natives in the Southeast. He frequently commented on the aid and friendship of the local Indians, acclaiming the kindness the natives showed towards the colonists and the benefits the Indians' friendship could procure for the fledgling settlement. Despite having difficult relations with South Carolina in the past, the southeastern natives seemed inclined to work with Oglethorpe and the new Georgia colony, and Georgia-native relations began on a strong footing. Even Oglethorpe was amazed at the reception he and the settlers enjoyed, recognizing

that “the Indians were most surprisingly inclined towards friendship with us.”¹⁰

Oglethorpe was determined from the outset to ask their permission to establish the new colony, to delineate clear boundaries and land cessions, and to gain their trust and support. By all contemporary accounts and historical assessments, Indian relations were one of Oglethorpe’s strong points, and the success of early Georgia Indian relations is largely credited to him.¹¹ One Georgia settler recognized the importance of Oglethorpe’s diplomatic abilities, boasting that the colony’s leader had “found means to keep a good correspondence with the Indians of these parts.”¹² As a result, the natives were inclined to be receptive to the new colony, and in general, most settlers could report that “the Indians are very kind.”¹³

Those Indians closest to the new Georgia settlements lived in friendship with the colonists and enjoyed almost daily contact with them. They were frequently in town as just another component of the varied personae that made up the population of the new frontier settlements. Under the Trustees’ management of the colony, natives were welcomed in white settlements and on individual farms and homesteads. Indians were omnipresent, not distant and foreign, not out there in “Indian country,” but familiar sightings closer to home. This was not just because of their close proximity to the settlements but because of their general presence within the areas white settlers

¹⁰James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, Dec. 1733, in *OG*, 1:27.

¹¹Kenneth Coleman, *Colonial Georgia: A History* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1976), 32; Sweet, *Negotiating for Georgia*, 30.

¹²Hector Beaufain to Mr. Simond, Jan. 23, 1734, in *OG*, 1:37.

¹³William Kilbury to Francis Harbin, Feb. 6, 1733, in *OG*, 1:6.

frequented. In town, on the paths between settlements, in the woods, on the frontiers, and within outlying forts and settlements – all were places where the two groups intermingled. No matter where a Georgia settler resided, Indians were typically an everyday sight, for they “dwell among us as neighbours, and are frequently in town.”¹⁴ One Georgia militiaman who was talking about his fellow soldiers nonchalantly included a number of “Indians who are often with us.”¹⁵ Stephens wrote of “one of our Neighbouring Indians coming to Town this morning” as a usual happenstance. The native had heard, by chance, of some useful news on the way into Savannah and stopped by Stephens’ to relay it.¹⁶ Even when large groups of Indians appeared in town, the Georgia settlers were not alarmed. One fall morning in 1743, Savannah was “Agreeably suprizd” by the shouts of a larger-than-normal group of neighboring Indians, but the townspeople were not taken off guard by their presence. The visit was an ordinary occurrence to which they responded in usual fashion: “We always receive them kindly.”¹⁷ Whites did not keep their distance from the Indians either. For those natives who lived closest to Georgia settlers, such as in Tomochichi’s village or at the Musgrove’s Cowpen, it was common for white visitors to venture from town to visit with them as well. No special permission was needed in advance, no ritualized fanfare occurred upon their arrival; they were just neighbors visiting with each other. The

¹⁴*JWS*, 2:89, June 5, 1742.

¹⁵Joseph Herrington to James Oglethorpe, March 22, 1735, in *OG*, 1:139.

¹⁶*CRG*, 4:643, Aug. 17, 1740.

¹⁷*JWS*, 2:18, Sept. 16, 1743.

Musgrove's Cowpen was within a healthy walking distance, enough to allow William Stephens and others to drop by during an evening stroll. On another occasion, Stephens needed to entertain two sea captains while the clerks settled some of their accounts, so Stephens and Thomas Causton took them around Savannah, showed them some of the country, stopped in "to Tomochichi's Indian Town," and ended up at the Cowpen for dinner, hosted by Mary and Jacob Matthews.¹⁸

Even those Indians who did not live in the immediate environs were frequent guests in town. Whether visiting on diplomatic missions or passing through on their way to other locales, such as the Frederica fort in order to join General Oglethorpe, even these more-distant natives were familiar sights. The journey of three Upper Creek men in 1741 was typical of many of the Indians' travels through town. On June 5, Secretary Stephens received notice that three Creek Indians had arrived at the Matthews' trading post. One, named the Wolf, was a "noted warrior" and "great leader in that country," and he and his two Indian friends were on their way to meet General Oglethorpe at Fort Frederica. Mary's homestead was the common meeting place, where the Indians knew they could arrive unannounced and still be received kindly, where they could wait until official notice could be sent to Savannah to alert the magistrates of their arrival, and enjoy familiar friendly company while they waited to be received by the Georgia officials. Upon hearing of the Indians' arrival, Stephens dispatched a boat to bring all three to town, met with them with the usual ceremony, and promised to help send them on their way to Frederica. Having already traveled a great distance, the Indians welcomed the

¹⁸*CRG*, 4:49, Dec. 13, 1737; *CRG*, 4:149, June 1, 1738.

opportunity to stay a while before they continued their journey to the Fort, and in the evening, returned to Mary's. The next day, the Indians desired to speak with the magistrates again, and Stephens and two others all agreed to gather at Mrs. Musgrove's. They met for over an hour, reaffirming alliances, telling stories of their exploits and allegiances, reassuring each other of their friendship. Mary translated, the two parties shared a pipe, and everyone parted at the end "in Mighty good Humor." On June 9, Stephens made good on his promise to ensure the Indians made their way to see the General, having Lieutenant Richard Kent transport them down in the afternoon. Two weeks later, Savannah welcomed the three Indians again on their return trip home.¹⁹

After Georgia became a royal colony, the government made some attempt to limit interaction between the two races, at least within the perimeters of white settlements. The legislature passed a bill in 1757 designed to "prevent any Person from trading with or encouraging of any Indian to come within the settlements of this Province."²⁰ But this had more to do with regulating trade than with cultural interaction, and contact between whites and natives occurred consistently in Georgia throughout the colonial period. Even on the cusp of the revolutionary era, Indians still frequently visited with their British neighbors, including within traditionally prescribed white domains. Governor James Wright commented on his friendship with "a very good Fellow" named St. Jago, a Creek Indian living within ceded territory who "comes to see me some times." Wright was

¹⁹*CRG*, vol. 4, pt. 2:158, June 5, 160, June 6, 162, June 9, 173, June 21, 1741.

²⁰Journal of the Commons House Assembly, Feb. 4, 1757, *CRG*, 13:154.

unequivocal about the depth of their relationship, proclaiming that “we are very good Friends.”²¹

The daily lives of both Indians and colonists led to many spontaneous and deliberate interactions between the two groups, but contrary to what might be the normal perception, running into a member of the opposite group was seldom alarming. When Hector de Beaufain, a resident of Purrysburg, South Carolina, journeyed with Oglethorpe and other Georgians in early 1734, the group crossed paths with an Indian family traveling in a canoe. Rather than ignoring or avoiding each other, the two parties took time to stop and exchange pleasantries.²² When small parties of whites and Indians ran into each other in the woods, they often stopped to interact, share food or information, and despite the language and cultural barriers, act like neighbors. As an example, a group of Georgia officials were exploring the waterways around St. Catherine’s Island in 1736 when they ran into a small hunting party of Indians. They invited the Indians on board, and the officials shared some biscuit and wine, while the Indians contributed fresh deer meat to the repast.²³ In Oglethorpe’s exploratory travels, he accidentally “met with an Indian fellow who had been out a hunting.” Though the two could not communicate through language, the Indian “gave me to understand, he would be my guide and that I

²¹Talk of James Wright to Emistesego and the Gun Merchant, Creek chiefs, June 25, 1771, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 2:370.

²²Hector de Beaufain to Peter and/or JC Simond in London, Jan. 23, 1734, *CRG*, 20:46.

²³*EJ*, 133, Feb. 16, 1736.

should be welcome to some of his venison.”²⁴ During an evening walk in 1737, Secretary William Stephens came upon a large feast at the home of Mrs. Matthews, which he and his companions were promptly invited to join.²⁵ Yet another group, this one consisting of African slaves who belonged to a white trader, were traveling down river in a trading boat in 1772. When they ran short on supplies, they hailed an Indian on shore to see if he had any meat to share. The Indian replied that he had none, but informed them that the area was good for hunting and offered to help. They invited him onboard to share a bit of rum before the Indian and one of the Africans went ashore to go “a hunting.”²⁶ These spontaneous gestures illuminate the casual interaction that occurred between the different cultures, chance occurrences that reaffirmed the connections between neighbors.

Like most neighbors, Georgia settlers and Indians had many deliberate encounters as well, purposeful meetings designed to have the two groups come together and interact. Foremost among these was trade, with the Indians frequently bringing their skins to exchange for food, rum, cloth, and other items. Clearly, Indians interacted with traders to exchange valuable items in this economic trafficking, but the exchange also took place between Indians and average Georgia settlers in places much closer than the backcountry. Neighboring Indians routinely visited with locals to trade, sometimes in town, but frequently at their homesteads. The Indians had a ready market in the settlers, and the

²⁴[James E. Oglethorpe], *A new voyage to Georgia by a young gentleman giving an account of his travels to South Carolina and part of North Carolina to which is added, a curious account of the Indians. By an honorable person* (London: 1735), 36.

²⁵CRG, 4:49, Dec. 13, 1737.

²⁶Proceedings of the Governor and Council, CRG, 12:337.

settlers frequently bought or traded with the Indians a variety of goods, including food and pelts. Especially when a new settlement was struggling, foremost among the items traded for would be corn and meat, either beef or venison. For the Indians' part, they secured rice, food, rum, and sometimes weapons or ammunition.²⁷ The trade itself has been extensively examined in such works as Kathryn Braund's *Deerskins and Duffels*,²⁸ but the items traded are not as nearly important to this study as the locale and means through which the interaction occurred. It was not accomplished exclusively through traders, or in places far removed from the average Georgia citizen, but frequently through the settlers themselves, on their property, and even within their own homes.

Homesteaders who lived near Indian villages or traveling paths had an added economic opportunity to benefit from the native economy. One settler reported that he had "several Indians that come and visit me for the sake of rice and they bring me their skins."²⁹

The Indians, however, did not have only pelts to offer; in fact, they were frequently a larger supplier of food to the settlers rather than the other way around. Settlers found it very difficult to cultivate their own crops, and even maintaining a herd of domestic livestock proved tricky. Mr. Causton, the colony's storekeeper, could not keep the Trustees' herd together and was required to buy beef from the neighboring

²⁷Robert Park to Mr. Hucks, Dec. 24, 1734, in *OG*, 1:79; *Von Reck's Voyage: Drawings and Journal of Philip Georg Friedrich von Reck*, ed. by Kristian Hvidt (Savannah, GA: Beehive Press, 1980), 21.

²⁸Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels: Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685-1815* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1993).

²⁹Robert Parker to Mr Hucks, Dec. 24, 1734, *CRG*, 20:134.

Indians and from Mrs. Musgrove's cowpen.³⁰ The Indians were such a large supplier of beef to the colonists in the early years that the Trustees advised Causton to buy only live cattle from them so as to not encourage any enterprising Indians to kill and sell the colonists' cattle.³¹ Those "People that live in Country Plantations" could have the Indians deliver meat to them at a very reasonable rate, for the natives would "bring it many miles for the Value of Six Pence Sterling" for venison and "a Wild Turkey of forty pound weight for the Value of Two pence."³² Other Georgians could also get venison from the Indians for a "very moderate rate."³³ The entire fate of the small Salzburger town of Ebenezer depended largely on the Indians to supply them with corn, meat, and pelts because they were at first unsuccessful producing their own.³⁴ The town was fortunately located within a few miles of a Yuchi settlement, and those Indians frequently sustained the settlers.

The interaction between the natives and the European settlers, however, was never limited to the one economical focus of trade. In Georgia, whites and Indians

³⁰Thomas Christie to James Oglethorpe, Dec. 14, 1734, in *OG*, 1:70.

³¹Harman Verelst to Thomas Causton, May 15, 1735, *CRG*, 29:52. For a brief but useful discussion of the natives' early adoption of cattle-raising, see Joshua Piker, *Okfuskee: A Creek Indian Town in Colonial America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 123-25.

³²"Account of the Province of South Carolina and Georgia" in Rodney M. Baine, ed. *The Publications of James Edward Oglethorpe* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 218.

³³Thomas Causton to his wife, March 12, 1733, in *OG*, 1:9.

³⁴Von Reck, *Voyage*, 21; Sweet, *Negotiating for Georgia*, 106. For the frequency and variety of foods provided to the Salzburgers by the Indians, see for example *DRS*, 1:70, 81, 93; 3:67, 81, 185, 208; 5:181; 6:142.

interacted for myriad purposes, including entertainment and companionship, to share information, to provide aid or assistance to one another, and to help in their common defense. Even food could lose its economic focus and bring the two groups together through a charitable one.

Food items were an important component of cultural interaction, not only in terms of trade, but in terms of hospitality and reciprocity. In Indian society, hospitality was the rule; you provided for your guests when they were visiting, and the same was expected in return.³⁵ The Trustees' accountant recognized this necessity when he succinctly noted that "The Indians must have Corn as usual when they come to Town."³⁶ This hospitality was a prerequisite, something necessary to sustain neighborly relations between the two cultures, and Georgia officials, both in the colony and in England, often referred to the expense of it as a forgone conclusion. Standard figures were routinely approved in the budgets for "Charges of the Indians when they come to Towns in Georgia"³⁷ as were specific reimbursements to individuals who supplied lodging, food, or "sundries to the Indians" while they were visiting with their white counterparts.³⁸ Officials often had to

³⁵See, for instance, James H. Merrell's *The Indians New World: Catawbas and their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal* (New York: WW Norton, 1989), 30.

³⁶Harman Verelst to the Bailiffs and Recorder of Savannah, May 15, 1735, *CRG*, 29:62.

³⁷Minutes of the Common Council, April 18, 1743, *CRG*, 2:419; see, for example, Minutes of the Common Council, May 30, 1739, *CRG*, 2:281.

³⁸See, for example, *CRG*, 19:50, April 11, 1768, "to Robert Baillie Esquire, Three pound eleven shillings and one penny." See also *CRG*, 7:244, Aug. 19, 1755, "payable ... to William Little esquire on order for twenty two pounds sterling on account of the expences for the entertainment of Indians in town."

“consider of a proper Reward” for those whites who attended the visiting Indians, not only the gentlemen but frequently their wives and housekeepers as well.³⁹

These meetings occurred frequently, even when there were no specific diplomatic measures to discuss, such as when “sundry head Indians from the Upper Creek nation” arrived in Savannah on December 31, 1762. The Gun-Merchant, one of the chiefs, explained that “no other occasion had brought them down than merely to pay a visit to his Excellency agreeable to his invitation and as had been customary with them at certain seasons ever since their acquaintance with the English.”⁴⁰ The high cost was a small price to pay to ensure good relations, and the officials were willing to devote much time and money to the cause. James Oglethorpe noted that in the first year of the colony, they fed “259 souls in Town” but also provided sustenance for many “Indians and strangers” besides.⁴¹ Six years later, the Trustees’ storekeeper felt the hospitality issue demanded much of him, for he had “sacrificed every minute of my own, and family’s time, and all my Goods, Eatables and Drinkables to Indians and strangers,” all for the “sake of the Colony, and its Safety.”⁴² Clearly, the provision of food and other hospitality was a required component of native-Georgian interrelations. When thirty-six Choctaws arrived unexpectedly in Savannah, trader Thomas Jones had to improvise quickly to meet the high standards of hospitality expected. The Trustees’ store was empty, so he at first

³⁹For examples, see *CRG*, 2: 77, Nov. 11, 1734, and *CRG*, 2:78, Nov. 20, 1734, in which compensation is offered “for the trouble in attending on the Indians.”

⁴⁰Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Dec. 31, 1762, *CRG*, 8:777.

⁴¹James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, Dec. 1733, *CRG*, 20:42.

⁴²Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Jan. 4, 1739, *CRG*, vol. 22, pt. 2:33.

entertained the natives with tobacco, wine, and bread. In the meantime, he “bought two Hogs and three barrls of Beer” and, at the first opportunity, had “three of ye trustees steers killd and bred a hogshead of molasses Beer.” He still worried that the supply would not be enough.⁴³ Entertaining the Indians “in town” occurred frequently and was customary, and the Indians, known for their hospitality, returned the favor when officials visited them in their towns. In 1739, when Oglethorpe ventured to Coweta, the lead town of the Lower Creek Indians, they reciprocated in kind: they “received his Excellency with the greatest respect and friendship, and entertained him and his Men with plenty of Fowls, Beef, Pork, Venison, Melons and other fruit.”⁴⁴

These meetings provided an opportunity for each host to show the requisite hospitality to their visitors and, due to the nature of the meeting, usually involved government leaders of both cultures. However, in the interaction of these two cultures, hospitality and charity were not limited to the upper echelons but extended to other strata as well. Even at these diplomatic meetings, visiting groups of Indians often included women and children. In 1750, for example, a small party consisting of eight Upper Creeks, both women and men, arrived in Savannah; a larger group consisting of men, women, and children arrived unannounced in town in 1755; both groups were “accordingly ordered to be provided for,” entertained at the expense of the government,

⁴³Thomas Jones to Harman Verelst, Feb. 17, 1739, in *OG*, 2:390.

⁴⁴Unknown to James Oglethorpe regarding Treaty with the Creeks at Coweta Town, Sept. 11, 1739, *CRG*, vol. 22, pt. 2:214.

and certainly interacted with whites.⁴⁵ As wives and children were present, the focus was not limited strictly to political discourse. It is certain that these Indians were seldom lodged at common settlers' homes; in the capital city, there were enough government officials and those who had connections to the Indians, including Indian agents and traders, to accommodate them. It is evident, however, that these interactions were not always strictly political and that they frequently brought all levels of both societies into close contact with one another.⁴⁶

* * * * *

From the outset, the new Georgia colonists depended heavily on the charity of the local native population. Even before the colony was established, the Trustees' secretary, Benjamin Martyn, contacted the governor of South Carolina, Robert Johnson, and asked his help in securing "some of the most Friendly among the Indians" to come to the new settlements and help the settlers "in Hunting &c."⁴⁷ Whether Johnson was able to secure South Carolina's Indian allies to help the fledgling settlement at Savannah is uncertain, but the natives in closer proximity frequently aided their newest neighbors. When alternate provisions ran short, the Georgia colonists had a ready supply of meat thanks to the Indians, for "they have always have parties out in hunting, and they bring us

⁴⁵Proceedings of the President, Sept. 15, 1750, *CRG*, 6:331; Proceedings of the Governor and Council, March 10, 1755, *CRG*, 7:135.

⁴⁶Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Dec. 9, 1771, *CRG*, 12:52-54; Aug. 30, 1774, *CRG*, 12:407.

⁴⁷Benjamin Martyn to Governor Robert Johnson of South Carolina, Oct. 18, 1732, *CRG*, 29:1.

venison.”⁴⁸ Tomochichi himself was instrumental in supplying provisions to the settlers. On a spring day in 1736, a small hunting party of Yamacraws, led by Tomochichi and Toonahowi, arrived into town bringing “as many deer as fed the whole colony for some days.” When they told Oglethorpe they would head out the next day to hunt buffalo, Oglethorpe decided he would join them.⁴⁹ The two leaders had journeyed the month before “to hunt the buffalo as far as the utmost extent of his dominions towards Augustine,” which gave Oglethorpe the added benefit of learning the boundaries of the Yamacraws’ territory. But the time spent with Tomochichi and the other Indians rendered not only food and valuable information for the British but also the opportunity for both sides to learn more about each other and subsequently strengthened the bond of friendship.⁵⁰

Obviously, Tomochichi had his own diplomatic motivations for aiding Oglethorpe as the founder of the colony, but the chief directed his people to aid all the Georgia settlers, and he led by example. When Tomochichi heard that many of the English settlers were ill and running short on fresh meat, he and a group of Indians went hunting and “obtained much game, which he sent thither.” News came back to the chief that very few of the lower classes had received any of his charitable gift. Disturbed that his efforts were misapplied, Tomochichi went hunting again, and determined to see that

⁴⁸Thomas Causton to his wife, March 12, 1733, in *OG*, 1:9.

⁴⁹An Anonymous Letter, Frederica, April 12, 1736, in *OG*, 1:260-61.

⁵⁰James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, March 16, 1736, in *OG*, 1:251-52.

the food was distributed justly, “what he shot he divided himself among the sick and the poor.”⁵¹

Neither was this charitable interaction limited to the capital city; as Georgians initiated new settlements, the Indians were there to help them. When the Scots established Darien in 1735, the Trustees told Thomas Causton to first secure permission from the local Indians to proceed with the settlement, and then to “get some of them to go and hunt for them and show them the country.”⁵² Those Indians closest to the Salzburger settlement of Ebenezer were asked to come “shoot game for the sick,”⁵³ and natives helped to provide for those at Frederica as well. When that town was established in 1736 on the farthest frontier to guard against the Spanish, the soldiers and settlers had difficulty providing for themselves, for although “there are a great many deer on this island, . . . we seldom get any of them, the wood being very thick.” Fortunately, the natives were willing to share – “the Indians very often bring us 10 or 12 deer at a time and a whole buffalo at a time.”⁵⁴ When the English and Indian allies were in the war camps together, such as during the siege of St. Augustine, the natives kept the troops well-fed, bringing in “plenty of fresh beef.” The English troops could sometimes secure some fowl or small game, but it was the Indians who brought in the larger animals,

⁵¹Von Reck, *Voyage*, 41.

⁵²Harman Verlest to Thomas Causton, Aug. 22, 1735, *CRG*, 29:85.

⁵³Von Reck, *Voyage*, 44.

⁵⁴Joseph Cannon to Henry Flitcroft, Nov. 8, 1736, in *OG*, 1:282.

including cattle, deer, and bear, to fill the troops' stomachs.⁵⁵ Keenly aware of the importance of reciprocity, the Georgians provided for their allies when they could, especially when the Indians voluntarily traveled from their nations to rendezvous with the British army. At these times, the whites along the way took care to provide for the allies, "sending them forward with provisions &c."⁵⁶ As one Creek chief explained, "Tis true we experienced great hardships in our Journey from the back lands being Uncultivated but as soon as we reached the Houses of our Friends we received Plenty of every Thing, and the kindest Treatment Possible."⁵⁷

The charitable interaction between whites and Indians was not limited to issues of food and provisions. Initially, friendly Indians were supposed to help clear land for the new settlement,⁵⁸ and although the natives proved more useful in hunting and providing food for the colonists, they could offer other valuable assistance as well. Being local, the Indians had useful information about the land, the flora, and the fauna that could prove all-important to the struggling colonists attempting to make their home in this foreign territory. Many Indians shared the information they had, illuminating the settlers about the new land, the climate, and the land's resources. One Yuchi Indian alerted Oglethorpe to the presence of a silver mine and promised to bring him a sample.⁵⁹ The Creek Indians

⁵⁵Mark Carr to James Campbell, Jan. 28. 1740, in *OG*, 2:446.

⁵⁶*JWS*, 1:58, March 31, 1742.

⁵⁷Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Oct. 29, 1757, *CRG*, 7:647.

⁵⁸Benjamin Martyn, *Reasons for Establishing the Colony of Georgia with Regard to the Trade of Great Britain*, (London: W. Meadows, 1732), 27.

⁵⁹James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, March 12, 1733, in *OG*, 1:x.

divulged useful information to an English captain about the Mississippi River and its uses for a navy, noting that “no Hurricanes or hard Gales or Wind ever blow down their trees” which would help in their maneuvering the squadron.⁶⁰

Knowing little about the pharmaceutical uses for local flora or the propagation of seeds or plants, explorers and settlers were dependent upon the natives’ knowledge. The Indians informed John Brickell during his travels that “Bazoar-stones” could be found in the mountains. Given Brickell’s concentration on medicines, he was most likely hopeful of finding bezoars, stones from animals that were thought to have powers of antidote for many kinds of poison.⁶¹ On multiple occasions, the Indians sent seeds and plants known for their healing power as presents to the Georgia officials.⁶² Thanks to the Indians, James Oglethorpe himself knew of “several herbs that have great virtues in physic, particularly for the cures of venous bites and wounds.”⁶³ Another cure the Indians shared with the settlers was the use of a root they called pasaw (*Eryngium yuccafolium*) to treat a rattlesnake bite. They claimed that if it was applied in time, it will “suck out the poison and heal the wound.”⁶⁴ Yuchi Indians nearby the Salzburger settlement of Ebenezer

⁶⁰*EJ*, 18, July 13, 1736.

⁶¹John Brickell, *The Natural History of North Carolina* (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1969), 343.

⁶²See for example James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, May 14, 1733, in *OG*, 1: 16; *EJ*, 28-29, July 4, 1733; Effects Received in England...from the several persons hereafter mentioned; and applied by the trustees, Nov 11, 1734, *CRG*, 3:93.

⁶³“Account of the Province of South Carolina and Georgia” in Baine, *Publications*, 250.

⁶⁴Von Reck, *Voyage*, 37.

provided their neighbors another method for dealing with snakebites that involved using a “glowing ember” and performed lancings to cure lameness that affected one of the congregation.⁶⁵ Indians also shared the knowledge of local plants that could cure or lessen the symptoms of various diseases that afflicted both whites and natives. Settlers who suffered from dysentery hoped to be cured by “the Remdys which the Indians administered.”⁶⁶ For those settlers who had problems with gout, the Indians advised the use of Casseny, a tea which the traders called “Black Drink” (*Ilex vomitoria*) and which was brewed from native plants. The Rev. Francis Piercy proclaimed it to be “very wholesome for any body else as well as those that have the gout,” noting that “Now all the Gentry of the Town drink it frequently.”⁶⁷

Although the natives’ use of local herbs for medicines was efficacious, English doctors could also help the Indian population. Included among Indian agent Patrick Mackay’s expedition to Coweta in 1734 was a doctor who administered to the Creeks at least during one season. Not only was he successful at “cur[ing] several of some distempers as it is called here, and of several other illnesses,” but he seemed to get along well with the natives – Mackay noted that he was “a very acceptable person among the Indians.”⁶⁸ On another occasion, thirty-one sick Indians arrived in Savannah, having been sent there by Oglethorpe to seek medical attention. They “remained a great while

⁶⁵*DRS*, 6:66, 16:193.

⁶⁶Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Feb. 14, 1739, *CRG*, vol. 22, pt. 2:72.

⁶⁷Francis Piercy to Reverend Forester, June 1, 1735, in *OG*, 1:179.

⁶⁸Patrick Mackay to the Trustees, March 28, 1735, in *OG*, 1:151.

with us” all the while having “due attendance and care taken of them.”⁶⁹ A wounded Creek Indian lived among the Germans at Ebenezer during his recuperation and spent much time with the visiting scholar Philip Georg Friedrich von Reck, who even left to posterity a drawing of his Indian friend.⁷⁰

When the Salzburgers’ doctor, Andreas Zwifler, went missing in 1735, the Georgia settlers called upon the friendship and skills of the native population. Zwifler had been lost for close to two weeks with no sign of him anywhere; as soon as Thomas Causton heard the news, he “sent some Indians to find him.” The natives immediately set out and successfully located the missing doctor, “brought him safe home, and he is very well.”⁷¹

It should not be assumed that the Indians were willing to help their white neighbors only when so requested by officials or if it was to their own advantage. As a preeminent example, three soldiers from Fort Argyle had overturned their boat and thus became stranded on a marsh island early in 1745. As the days wore on and hope of a rescue waned, one man decided to risk the waters and go for help. After struggling to cross, “at length he came to the little Ogeechee [river], where by good Providence he met with an Indian in a small Canoe.” Imagine the surprise this lone Indian must have expressed, and consider his options. Not only did the native allow the soldier out of the

⁶⁹Mr. Jones to Harman Verelst, July 8, 1741, *CRG*, 23:63. These were most likely allied Indian warriors who had been helping Oglethorpe in his siege against the Spanish during the War of Jenkins’ Ear.

⁷⁰Von Reck, *Voyage*, 106.

⁷¹Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Jan. 16, 1735, *CRG*, 20:170.

water and offer him the security of his boat, but he then transported him to the closest “guard at the Narrows.” Once safely arrived back in touch with a military detachment, the stranded soldier headed up a rescue party to lead them back to the other two stranded soldiers, and all returned safely to Fort Argyle.⁷²

More threatening than the land were usually the people roaming around it, and the Indians frequently helped protect their British neighbors from harm. In 1756, a young Englishman named William Wilkins and four white companions had ventured to the frontier “in order to make a fall Hunt among the Creek Indians.” With the Seven Years’ War looming on the horizon, however, tensions ran high and the Georgia settler noticed a “disagreeable change in the behaviour of several of the Indians.” Ten days into their communal hunt, word reached the young men that a war was “daily expected,” and in the interest of safety “they determined to get from among the Indians.” The boys were probably more concerned about escaping the dangerous territory than worried about any harm that could come from their specific hunting companions, and in fact, they relied on their Indian friends to help them get home. The brother of an Oconee chief warned the boys that they were too far in the interior, and he believed that traveling overland back to the British settlements was too dangerous in the precarious political climate. Instead, he suggested that they head straight to St. Augustine, meet with the Spanish governor, and then “pass from thence along the sea shore to Georgia.” The boys agreed, and not only heeded the advice offered by the Indian but were guarded by the native for the first half of the six-day journey to St. Augustine. They arrived safely in the Spanish colony and

⁷²*JWS*, 2:194, Feb. 5, 1745.

later returned to Frederica, Georgia, thanks to the wisdom and protection of their Indian friend.⁷³ In another instance, the Creek Indians saved the life of a white trader named August Smith when fighting broke out between the French and the Chickasaws in 1736. Smith was away from his home and dangerously close to the fighting, “which the Indians understanding immediately sent out a party to guard him back to the Creek nation.”⁷⁴ In this environment, it was easy to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, and whites like Smith were grateful for those friends who helped to keep them out of danger. But sometimes those on the frontier had to depend on the kindness of strangers, and even then, natives could be surprisingly accommodating in protecting foreigners. When two Spanish soldiers desired to desert the small Spanish outpost of St. Marks due to a lack of provisions and rampant illness, the lower Creek Indians aided them and “helped them forward to Augusta.”⁷⁵

On the other hand, Indians in early Georgia were seldom out of place or in danger among the white community. But in the rare instance where whites could help, they often used their authority to do so. In these instances, whites usually did more to secure Indians from harm caused by other rival Indians than from white settlers but were still of valuable assistance nonetheless. For example, a group of Cherokees were traveling near Mount Pleasant in Yuchi territory in early 1741 and, after being questioned by an English military detachment, were suspected of being “on mischief.” The Creeks and Yuchis

⁷³Deposition of William Wilkins, Frederica, Nov. 24, 1756, *CRG*, 7:429.

⁷⁴Samuel Eveleigh to Harman Verelst, Aug. 7, 1736, *CRG*, 21:204.

⁷⁵*JWS*, 2:100, May 5, 1744.

were alerted that the “Cherokee were abroad.” At the same time, two other Cherokees who had helped in the siege of St. Augustine were now traveling in the vicinity, returning home. Should these two be mistaken for the hostile Indians, they would face real danger, and the British took measures to see that the two Cherokees returned home safely.

William Stephens was alerted and employed to find them transportation. They were housed at Matthews’ until a boat patrol named Daniel Demetrie could pick them up and deliver them to Lieutenant Kent in Augusta. Demetrie had “the charge of two or three Cherokee Indians, to be delivered in safety.” Once they were “safely delivered” there, Kent saw that they made their way home.⁷⁶

In many instances, Indians could serve multiple functions, as in the case of Brickell’s Indian companions. When the explorer traveled throughout the Southeast in the late 1720s, his party included two Indians who acted as guides, provided food for the party by hunting, and served as their interpreters when they came upon other Indians. Brickell was well pleased with the job they did, having nothing but praise for the two men. He recognized their importance, knowing full well that having the aid they provided, as well as their very presence to assure other natives that the party came in “a friendly manner,” likely meant the success and safety of their expedition.⁷⁷

Like the traders, Indians could be employed officially as interpreters, though because of their cultural allegiances, only those who were deeply trusted to translate sincerely were allowed to broker this exchange. Indians who served as interpreters often

⁷⁶CRG, vol. 4, pt. 2:85, Feb. 7, 1741; 88, Feb. 11, 1741; 103-4, March 12, 1741.

⁷⁷Brickell, *History*, 387, 389.

had a strong connection to white culture as well, whether through marriage or as a trusted friend and advisor to white officials. Those Indians who were also traders, such as Johnny and Mary Musgrove, and thus had a bridge to both worlds were the most successful interpreters. Mary was Oglethorpe's personal interpreter and advisor whenever he was in the colony, and Johnny, himself of both Indian and white ancestry, journeyed to England with Tomochichi's Indian delegation in 1734 as their interpreter as well as serving in the colony. Mary was largely responsible for ensuring the close friendship between Oglethorpe and Tomochichi, but it did not take long for other Indians to become proficient in using European languages. Tomochichi's own nephew, Toonahowi, like many other young natives, learned English quickly; just over a year after the colony's founding, he was able to impress the Trustees during his visit to England with his knowledge. A book that was "accidentally lying on a table" caught the young Indian's eye, and he picked it up and "read tolerably out of it."⁷⁸ By 1736, Lord Egmont could report that Toonahowi "understands & speaks English So well as in Mr. Oglethorpe's opinion to be the best Interpreter we have."⁷⁹

Many Indian wives of traders served as interpreters, such as a Yuchi woman identified only as "Bartlet's wife." When the Savannah magistrates became uneasy that their Indian neighbors, the Yamacraws, were "under some discontent," they prevailed upon a Savannah freeholder named Edward Jenkins to discover the problem. To that end, he requested the assistance of a local trader's Indian wife, asking her to carry a

⁷⁸*EJ*, 63, Sept. 11, 1734.

⁷⁹*EJ*, 215, Dec. 1, 1736.

bottle of rum to the Indians but “to say nothing tell [til] I [Jenkins] came but drink with them.” She located the particular Indian he hoped to talk with, a Yamacraw by the name of Esteeche, and had him comfortable and loquacious by the time Jenkins arrived. The three of them visited over the bottle of rum with the Indian wife interpreting, coaxing Esteeche to unburden his troubles on them. Initially, Esteeche would not admit to any problems, but at length, the Indian confessed that despite magisterial attempts to regulate relations between white and Indians, one white man named Joseph Watson was causing considerable trouble, admitting that “his hart nor none of the Indians was Straigt towards Watson Nor never Woud.” Watson apparently drank with the Indians, with the implication that he rarely brought his own alcohol, and in his intoxicated state, he would beat them. Esteeche was visibly upset, “& in a great passion showed me some signe of his Blows.” Jenkins took the information to the magistrates, who in turn sent Mary Musgrove to talk with the Indians and smooth things over, “which in Great Measure abated their discontent” and according to Jenkins, the talk facilitated by the Indian wife was “an instrument of saving Mr. Watson’s life and perhaps of a great many others.”⁸⁰

Indians’ language skills could also serve a useful purpose when Europeans needed to converse with distant Indian groups. One Indian might know several native languages and could therefore serve as a bridge to communicate. A run-in between a group of Creeks and a varied group headed up by a Spaniard in 1736 illustrates the cultural plurality on the frontier and the important role that someone who could communicate among all of them played. Two Creek Indians belonging to a larger

⁸⁰Edward Jenkins to James Oglethorpe, Jan. 20, 1735, *CRG*, 20:185.

hunting party came upon several horses being guarded by four men: a Spaniard, a Yamassee Indian, a mulatto, and a negro. The four armed men moved to seize the two Creeks, but they “gave them good word.” How was this “good word’s” intent so quickly conveyed among such a disparate group? Fortunately, the Yamassee spoke the Creek dialect in addition to his native language and was fluent in Spanish as well. Only through this cultural broker were they able to “enter into a talk.” While conversing with this group, the Creeks were also able to learn that the Spaniards at St. Augustine were “daily expecting” reinforcements from Havana and that the Creeks would be welcomed allies.⁸¹

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This tidbit of diplomatic information highlights another means by which Indians served as important brokers between the different cultures – conveyers of vital diplomatic communication. Indians frequently carried communications back and forth, relayed intelligence about military positions, moods of friends and enemies, and inroads being made by natives and Europeans. Important diplomatic information such as this was a key component of the vital service Indians provided as cultural brokers on the frontier.

Like the traders, Indians could serve a valuable purpose in bringing communications from one person to another. Whether specifically “employed” for that purpose or carrying letters on their general passage through and on to other places, Indians were often entrusted to convey letters over great distances and to deliver them safely to the appropriate people. Indians traveled widely, but the extent of their boundaries was not limited to broad roamings over “Indian country.” They frequently

⁸¹[not signed] to Thomas Broughton, Feb. 22, 1736, *CRG*, 21:344.

traveled through white settlements. Just as white Indian traders were employed to carry letters and serve as a means for communication to travel, so were the Indians. Colonial officials, military personnel, Indian traders, and Indian leaders took advantage of the fact that an Indian or a group of Indians could be entrusted to deliver messages through the course of their usual travels and could send communiques along with them. Frequently, communication would be sent as a tagalong with a group that was en route for another purpose. When a small party of Creek Indians ventured from their homeland in March 1742, they were on their way to join Oglethorpe in Frederica, to help in the fight against the Spanish. On their journey, they passed through Savannah, stopping to visit with Secretary William Stephens and delivering a letter to him from Thomas Wiggins, a military commander at Mount Pleasant and an Indian trader among the Creeks.⁸²

A person traveling for the express purpose of delivering information from one group to another was known as a “runner” or an “express.” These were usually Indians and were utilized by native and colonial leaders alike. When danger was imminent, word passed between cultures and over distance through the runners, such as when William Stephens in Savannah received a letter “brought me by an Indian” from Lieutenant Willey, the commander at Mount Pleasant, alerting him that a band of Cherokees was “on mischief” and to keep the town’s guard up.⁸³ On another occasion, an Indian brought two letters to Savannah from Captain Mackay, communicating both news of danger and diplomatic instructions. One was addressed to Thomas Causton, notifying the townsmen

⁸²*JWS*, 1:58, March 31, 1742.

⁸³*CRG*, vol. 4, pt. 2:85, Feb. 7, 1741.

that the Spanish Indians were seeking reprisals for English-allied Indians having killed a Spaniard, warning them that neither the Indians nor the settlers were safe. The second was addressed to the chief men of the Lower Creek Nation who had just arrived in Savannah, requesting them to “tarry ‘till the Upper People came down” when Mackay could meet with them all together.⁸⁴ When Salzburger minister Johann Boltzius visited with an Indian messenger, he discovered that the various letters he carried “were numbered with I, II, III, IV so that he could deliver them one after the other at the proper place without confusion.”⁸⁵

The Indians could also bring news of the French and Spanish and their interrelations with the natives, such as when an English commander “received a message by a Tellico Runner who had just returned from Alabama fort” alerting him that four Cherokee Indians had joined the French with the intentions of sailing to France. In addition, the French were campaigning for the Cherokees to ally with them so well that “there are Runners sent throughout the whole Nation to invite the Indian of every town “to meet with the French to hear a talk and receive presents. According to the Indian informant, the French were enjoying much success among the Cherokees and planned to erect a fort near one of their towns.”⁸⁶

But Indians did not just bring news and communication into town from the outskirts; perhaps surprisingly, they were frequently employed by white officials in town

⁸⁴Thomas Causton to the Trustees, June 20 , 1735, in *OG*, 1:193.

⁸⁵*DRS*, 6:243, Oct. 16, 1739.

⁸⁶Journal of the Upper House of Assembly, Dec 2, 1756, *CRG*, 16:149.

to carry their messages to the nation. When the colony was transitioning from Governor Henry Ellis to James Wright in 1760, the Creeks had sent a talk to Savannah. As the new governor, Wright was not willing to risk that any part of his answer to that talk should be lost or misconstrued, and he employed many Indian runners, including one named Wehenny, to send “it out to your Country in writing” and ordered the white traders in the nations “to interpret it to all the head men there.”⁸⁷ When affidavits trickled in from the nation that some of the Creek traders were being harassed, the governor chose to send an express “forthwith to the Creek nation by Fulwygee-opia-Mico,” warning the Indians to treat the traders with the requisite respect and to abide by the treaties.⁸⁸ Sometimes the Indian runner not only delivered the message but brought back the natives’ response, as was the case with a trusted Creek named Selechee. In July 1760, Governor Ellis met with this messenger who “was just returned from the nation whither he had been dispatched with a Talk from his Excellency.” Selechee was able to report not only that he had successfully delivered the talk, but also on the manner in which it was received and what reactions followed:

I carried your Excellency’s Talk, as desired, through the Towns of the upper and lower Creek nations; in the lower Towns the Indians had a general Meeting at the Cussetaws, where the Talk was received with the utmost satisfaction, they said it was a good Proof how much your Excellency delighted in Peace. From thence I went to the upper towns (a beloved Man from the lower Towns attending me) and gave out the Talk at the Ockfuskees where, the Gun-Merchant, Mortar, and other Head Indians assembling themselves, the Talk was interpreted and very much approved: The Gun Merchant particularly expatiated on the Goodness of

⁸⁷Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Nov. 21, 1760, *CRG*, 8:428.

⁸⁸Proceedings of the Governor and Council, May 26, 1760, *CRG*, 8:316.

the Talk, how much Regard they ought to have to it, and that it behooved them to quench the Fire while it was yet in their Power: That thereupon the Indians forthwith went and collected the bones of the White People that had been murdered, wrapt them in white Skins and buried them. That the Indians said they thought it very hard that those who had no Hand in the Mischief should suffer for a few mad people; but at the same Time gave no Hints of their Intentions to commit those who did it. That the Mortar (with a Cherokee Indian who was with him and had come to the French at the Alabama fort for Assistance) as soon as the Talk was over set off for the Cherokee Nation, as it was thought to with Intent to persuade the Cherokees to make a Peace.⁸⁹

The wealth of information provided in just this one exchange was extremely useful. It provided intelligence on the Indians' reaction to the governor's talk, which specific headmen reacted in which particular ways, and the resulting actions of the Indians in hopes of meeting the governor half-way by burying the bodies and setting things in motion for peace. At the same time, the informant reinforced the notion that the entire group should not suffer for the actions of a few renegades and noted that no headmen made any promises about turning over or killing the murderers. Certainly Governor Ellis was in a much better position to gauge his next step with the information Selechee delivered.

The traders who lived and worked among the Indians also frequently employed Indians to convey their messages across Indian country. When trader George Galphin discovered in 1771 that one of the Creeks had killed a white man near Galphin's Cowpen, he requested that an Indian named Alleck inform the Creek headmen of the event and deliver to them Galphin's advice on how best to proceed to the benefit of

⁸⁹Proceedings of the Governor and Council, July 28, 1760, *CRG*, 8:348-9.

intercultural relations.⁹⁰ Conversely, when some white settlers killed some Upper Creeks in 1756, the traders at Augusta quickly drafted a message to be spread among those in the nation. They employed a prominent headman named Oboyloco or Handsome Fellow to take the Creeks a message imploring them to be patient, not to hurt any traders who might be among them, but to help the Augusta traders discover the exact circumstances so that justice could be served. They wanted to know how many Indians had been killed and wanted the headmen to send back word through another Indian messenger named the Old Man, who had traveled to the nation with Handsome Fellow. They also hoped to reassure the headmen, promising that “all Care should be taken to apprehend the Aggressors and give Satisfaction.”⁹¹

In colonial Georgia, natives clearly fulfilled many of the same diplomatic roles that traders did, bringing messages to the officials, carrying officials’ messages back to the nation, and reporting how the talks were received. On occasion, traders could not fulfill their other vital diplomatic duties, such as accompanying Indians on their journey to meetings, and at those times a trusted native could serve in their place. This was especially the case when those Indian groups who had less contact with Georgia officials ventured towards Savannah and local traders could not spare the time to accompany them. Creek trader Thomas Jones was one of the colonial representatives located closest to the Choctaws, who were traditionally allies of the French. When the Choctaws

⁹⁰Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Dec., 1771, *CRG*, 12:152-4.

⁹¹Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Nov. 16, 1756, *CRG*, 7:420.

expressed a desire to meet with the governor of Georgia, Jones employed a Creek headman by the name of the Dog King to escort the Choctaw group to Savannah.⁹²

Like the bilingual traders, if an Indian had enough command of both English and native languages, he could be trusted to not only deliver messages, but to interpret them as well.

Mixed-blood Indians most often fit this bill, such as “an half Indian called the Madcap Dog,” who in 1760 delivered a talk from a headman of the Tuckabatchees named Old Bracket and conversed with the governor, further clarifying the information Old Bracket’s talk had afforded him. At the end of the meeting, the governor requested that the Indian return back to his nation, not only to relay the governor’s answer to the ill headman, but also so that he could “use your interest to restore friendship and harmony between your people and us.”⁹³

Mixed bloods and full bloods alike could bridge the gap between the natives and the Georgia settlers, even if just through diplomatic efforts to smooth things over during the heat of the moment until cooler heads could prevail. Tomochichi, the chief of the Yamacraws, was especially known for his diplomacy and for endeavoring to foster good relations between the two groups.⁹⁴ But there were many Indians who sought to keep communications open, even in times of crisis. When Indian agent Patrick Mackay was

⁹²Patrick Mackay to the Trustees, March 28, 1735, in *OG*, 1:150.

⁹³Proceedings of the Governor and Council, June 5, 1760, *CRG*, 8:319-20.

⁹⁴For a full-length study, see C.C. Jones, Jr., *Historical Sketch of Tomochichi: Mico of the Yamacraws* (Albany, NY: Joel Munsell, 1868. Reprint, Savannah, GA: Oglethorpe Press, 1998).

planning his mission among the Creeks, rumors over his true intentions led to much consternation among the natives. The Indians became concerned, believing that when Mackay's expedition arrived, the Creeks would be overrun. They feared that he was going to build a "great many" forts, including a Great Castle on the Altamaha River. They worried that a "great number" of people would accompany him, that many more would follow, and that, of course, inevitably meant "a great many cattle" as well, all culminating in the belief that the Creeks must "expect to be destroyed soon."

Understandably worried, the Creek headmen wanted to discover if these reports were true and "resolved to go and see if Captain Mackay was coming in that manner, or no." But there were other Indian leaders who knew that the answers needed to be discovered diplomatically; Chegelli, the headman of Coweta, prevented the others from ambushing Mackay until they could hear from another trusted individual in the know: Tomochichi. Chegelli sent Edward Griffin, Mary Musgrove's brother, to Tomochichi to determine the truth. As soon as Tomochichi heard of the miscommunication, he "promised to send people up to Pacifye" the natives. Within a short time, Tomochichi worked to convince the headmen that the rumors were false and that the threat was not imminent by sending two of his warriors, Hillispelli and Sautuhi, to the nation to reassure them.⁹⁵ At another time, newly arrived minister John Wesley was hoping to secure some inroads into the conversion of the Creeks. Tomochichi once again offered to facilitate, promising that "I will go up and Speak to the wise men of our Nation, and I hope they will hear." He did not promise any concrete results, however, and in fact he kept Wesley in check by

⁹⁵Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Jan. 20, 1735, *CRG*, 21:70-71.

asserting that his people “would not be made Christians after the Spaniards way to make Christians. We would be taught first and then be baptized.”⁹⁶

Another headman who was known to the British as the Mad Warrior was also determined to provide truthful information before a crisis escalated needlessly. In an attempt to alleviate friction between his people and the white settlers, he took the opportunity to travel to Savannah in 1757 and met with the governor, letting him know of the Creeks’ concerns for the missteps of the South Carolina agent Daniel Peppers. By meeting with the governor, the Mad Warrior was operating “against the Will of the Heads of his Town,” but was willing to risk the repercussions if it brought the truth to light. The consequences were perhaps not too dire since he “approved of everything that had been said to him and would faithfully relay it to the Heads of the Nation at his return.”⁹⁷

St. Jago was another Indian available to convey diplomatic messages between the two cultures and served other diplomatic measures as well. As an “old and sensible man,” he was allowed to remain within the boundaries of land ceded to the whites. Although a member of the Tiger clan of the Creek confederacy, he probably attained status similar to a settlement Indian due to his location and connections to the whites. St. Jago provided two important diplomatic functions for the Indians – talks from the governor to the headmen could be forwarded through him, and assurance that he could

⁹⁶*EJ*, 131, Feb. 14, 1735.

⁹⁷Proceedings of the Governor and Council, July 30, 1757, *CRG*, 7:614-17.

“give us speedy intelligence of any Ruptures that might happen between the white people and us.”⁹⁸

Being able to comment on the relations between the different parties in the colonial Southeast, as St. Jago could, was probably the single most important diplomatic function the Indians could serve. Traveling over wide terrain, engaging people from all different cultures and political persuasions in their travels, the natives could obtain far more information on political maneuverings than could the Europeans.

Oglethorpe understood the important diplomatic role Indians could play and what he stood to gain by securing their aid. The Indians, “by ranging thro’ the Woods, would be capable of giving constant Intelligence, to prevent any Surprise upon the People, and would be a good Out guard for the inland Parts of the Province.”⁹⁹ Even news that the Indians “have seen nothing Stirring” reassured the Georgians that all was well.¹⁰⁰ When there was something menacing, however, the Indians were usually the first to know it. They reported frequently to Georgia officials on French, Spanish, and native populations. The intelligence they gathered included information regarding movement, the enemies’ strength and numbers, attempted new settlements or boundaries, and the interrelations of natives and Europeans.

Just a few months after the founding of Georgia, Creek Indians informed Oglethorpe that the Spanish “have begun to settle on this side the Altamaha.” From this

⁹⁸Enclosure no. 6 Talk of the Creeks, May 1, 1771, *CRG*, vol. 28 pt. 2:367.

⁹⁹Letter from Oglethorpe, April 18, 1733, *CRG*, 3:380.

¹⁰⁰Thomas Causton to Sir, Feb. 9, 1736, *CRG*, 21:34 and Captain Dunbar to James Oglethorpe, Jan. 23, 1735, in *OG*, 1:112.

settlement, said the Creeks, the Spanish were sending out scout boats to assess the territory around Savannah, and an “open boat full of armed men” attempted to navigate around the islands about forty miles away from the English settlement. The Indians attempted to engage them in conversation to find out more information, but the Spaniards opened fire, and the Creeks were forced to defend the territory, pushing the Spaniards back out to sea.¹⁰¹ Two years later, Tomochichi’s band reported that they had run into foreign Indians, most likely Spanish allies, scouting the area past Saint Simon’s Island, but fortunately reported that they saw no settlements or boats to indicate a larger Spanish presence.¹⁰²

The natives procured useful information for the Georgia officials not only because of the wide territory they covered, but also because they were being actively courted by the opposing European nations. The Indians used this to their own advantage, playing one nation against the other, accepting invitations to talk and accepting presents. If they were willing to share their knowledge, however, it could benefit a European nation as well. For instance, the English were able to secure some vital information about plans for an upcoming Spanish settlement on Amelia Island from the Creek Indians after they had been welcomed into the Spanish town of St. Augustine.¹⁰³ At another time, Cherekeileigie of the Lower Creeks was able to offer Indian agent Patrick Mackay

¹⁰¹James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, Dec. 1733, in *OG*, 1:30-31.

¹⁰²Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Sept. 8, 1735, in *OG*, 1:229.

¹⁰³Proceedings of the President, Nov. 13, 1753, *CRG*, 6:416.

specifics on a small Spanish fort known as Saint Mark's, alerting him that it "had three guns and 30 men" but no other settlements nearby.¹⁰⁴

Some Indians went so far as to volunteer to spy for their British allies. In 1737, when Georgia officials were unsure what to expect from the Spanish dominions, an Upper Creek whom the English called the Dog King "offered his service" to go to the Spanish colony "and get information if the Spaniards were preparing for war." The Indian stated that because he had recently been invited there, his presence would not raise any suspicion.¹⁰⁵ The same Indian whom had secured the specifics on Fort St. Mark's offered to "continue at the forks, where I can be a spy on all the actions of the Spaniards."¹⁰⁶ One enterprising allied Indian not only stopped a Spaniard traveling from St. Marks to St. Augustine to question him, but took from him the bundle of letters he was carrying and forwarded them to Captain Horton at Frederica.¹⁰⁷

The influence the French and Spanish both had among the natives was also extremely important information for the Georgia officials to know, and their native allies kept them abreast of those situations as well. Whether it was an account of fighting or courting, the natives could usually supply the needed information. In 1736, for instance, an Indian man and his wife came down from the Chickasaw Nation to the Creeks and gave an account that the French and their allied Indians had attacked the Chickasaws, but

¹⁰⁴Patrick Mackay to James Oglethorpe, March 29, 1735, in *OG*, 1:155.

¹⁰⁵Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Feb. 24, 1737, in *OG*, 1:300.

¹⁰⁶Patrick Mackay to James Oglethorpe, March 29, 1735, in *OG*, 1:153.

¹⁰⁷*JWS*, 2:187, Jan. 12, 1745.

that the Indians got the better of them, killing forty French and nine Indian allies.¹⁰⁸

When the French alliance with the Choctaws seemed to be weakening in 1735, it was a Creek chief who reported on the complaints the Indians had with the French and bore witness to the quarrel that ensued after the governor of Mobile found out the Choctaws had visited the English in Savannah. The Creek informant summarized the Choctaws' arguments: the English-allied Indians had far better presents and supplies than the Choctaws ever had with the French, and because they were free people, they could go wherever they wanted to trade. If the French did not improve their abilities to supply the Choctaws, they would defect to the English. In response, the French made a large showing of presents and reinforced the two Choctaw garrisons. These measures, according to the Creek informant, effectually "keeps the body of the Nation at home."¹⁰⁹ In 1754, with the Seven Years' War looming, both the French and the Spanish were having some success courting the natives, surprisingly even among traditionally British-allied Indians. They had convinced "some of the upper creeks to go to Mobile to receive presents, and ...some of the lower creeks to go to Augustine to receive presents." The Indian informant, a Lower Creek chief, admitted that he "could not yet learn what design the French and Spaniards had" but promised that he "should end'vour to acquaint himself and inform His Excellency therewith."¹¹⁰ Two years later, a Cherokee named the Old Warrior of Temotley presented some bad news to Captain Raymond Demere. He had an

¹⁰⁸Samuel Eveleigh to George Morley, May 31, 1736, *CRG*, 21:155.

¹⁰⁹Patrick Mackay to the Trustees, March 28, 1735, in *OG*, 1:150.

¹¹⁰Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Nov. 12, 1754, *CRG*, 7:33-34.

account from a trusted source that the Creek headmen had been meeting with the French at the Alabama Fort and that Cherokee ambassadors had been working to persuade the Creeks to the French interest as well. Things were not looking good for the English; in fact, the Old Warrior “says he looks upon the Creek Nation to be interely lost and is convinced they are Strongly in the French interest.” A *nota bene* to the account declared the trustworthiness of the source, the Old Warrior, as a “true friend to us” – one willing to not only relay diplomatic information to his English neighbors, but to seek it out, as Captain Demere had “sent him on purpose to Tellico for this Intelligence.”¹¹¹ Another trusted Indian, a Cherokee named Judge’s Friend, supported Old Warrior’s assessments when he visited Demere at Fort Loudon in mid-December. He voiced his concern that the entire nation could go with the French, and at the very least, there was a good chance that all the upper towns would ally with them. Judge’s Friend delivered this information and asked that “this talk may go to Virginia as well as Carolina” so that the English “may have proper assistance before its too late.”¹¹² Natives could even provide information about the Europeans’ actions to other natives, such as when the mountain Indians alerted the Creeks that the English had cattle grazing at the head of the Coosa River, an action which violated the agreement the Creeks had arranged with Superintendent of Indian Affairs John Stuart.¹¹³ This information provided the Creeks with a stronger stance the next time they met with Stuart.

¹¹¹Journal of the Upper House of Assembly, Nov. 25, 1756, *CRG*, 16:147-49.

¹¹²Journal of the Upper House of Assembly, Dec. 13, 1756, *CRG*, 16:150-51.

¹¹³Enclosure no. 6 Talk of the Creeks, May 1, 1771, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 2:367.

In the event that relations did sour or enemy Indians went on the warpath, the British could usually depend on an informant or ally among the friendly native population. One Indian man was sent from Savannah to Charles Town to alert the English that the Spaniards had made great inroads with the Indians above Augustine, convincing them that the English planned to destroy them and inciting them to war.¹¹⁴ In another instance, an Indian couple “who spoke pretty good English,” arrived at the house of Noble Jones to alert him and his family that some enemy Indians had “cut off some of the out Settlements” and were heading in his direction.¹¹⁵ The English also depended on the natives’ accounts for news of military successes. When Thomas Eyre arrived in Augusta to join Oglethorpe and aid in the siege of St Augustine, it was a Chickasaw chief who first relayed the happy news that the general had “reduced the two forts without the loss of a man.”¹¹⁶ The natives could also be employed as neutral messengers to deliver communication between opposing European nations. In 1756, a Spanish captain dispatched a Creek messenger to a small British outpost. He wanted “to acquaint the English living there” that the Spanish governor desired to communicate with them, and the Spanish captain expected the English to send a boat to receive the governor’s correspondence. The Indian messenger was permitted to enter the camp peacefully and was respectfully received, and the British complied with the instructions. When the

¹¹⁴William Bradley to Harman Verelst, April 13, 1736, *CRG*, 21:147.

¹¹⁵William Stephens and assistants to Benjamin Martin, *CRG*, 26:27.

¹¹⁶Enclosure of an abstract from my journal from my attending the general to the Indian nation to the raising of the siege of St Augustine, in *OG*, 2:508. The two forts to which the author is referring are Fort Picolata and Fort San Francisco de Pupo.

British sent the requested boat, two other Creek Indians accompanied the British captain to meet with the Spanish representatives.¹¹⁷

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Natives served as useful conveyers of a variety of diplomatic communications, whether relaying talks between the Indian nations and the colonial governors, dispensing information about the land, climate, flora, and fauna, utilizing their language skills, or serving as spies and reporters. Many of the same skills, talents, and circumstances that allowed them to be diplomatic informants also made them useful in mediating between cultures in other ways. Their ability to visit with different European nations, their skills in covering ground quickly and quietly, and their knowledge of the land all made them excellent candidates to serve as guides, trackers, and scouts for their Georgia neighbors. Even before Georgia was settled, Oglethorpe had benefitted from the kindness of an Indian who happened along his path, who although he could not communicate verbally with him, guided him safely to Musgrove's cowpen, a place where the Indian knew that both natives and whites would be well received.¹¹⁸

During the earliest years of the colony, Oglethorpe and other officials needed an understanding of what lands their new territory contained and where the boundaries of native claims and Spanish settlements extended. To that end, the Georgians turned to the natives. During Tomochichi's 1734 trip to England, he had promised King George that he would show the English "what lands belonged to their Nation." Therefore, in 1736,

¹¹⁷Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Nov. 29, 1756, *CRG*, 7:426.

¹¹⁸[Oglethorpe], *New Voyage*, 36.

Tomochichi organized a party of eight to ten Indians, including his nephew Toonahowi, to tour the domain. They joined Oglethorpe and the Indians led the exploration along the Georgia coast and its barrier islands, including Cumberland and Amelia islands, which Toonahowi named after the royalty he had met in London. During their expedition, the Indians took Oglethorpe “as far as the Spanish frontiers,” to the end of the St. Johns River where the Spanish had an outlook posted on the southern shore.¹¹⁹ Once there, Tomochichi himself led the General to a place from where they could observe the lookout but remain hidden themselves. The Indians volunteered to bring Oglethorpe a Spanish prisoner to question for information about their position, but Oglethorpe was able to convince the entourage to leave without drawing attention.¹²⁰ In reflection, Oglethorpe was surprised to find that it was a “much larger tract of land that he had ever till then supposed.”¹²¹

A few months later, Georgia’s secretary, William Stephens, was planning an expedition of his own with the governor of South Carolina. For this purpose, he acquired an Indian guide named Jack Smallwood. According to Stephens, Jack had many worthwhile attributes: he was an “active diligent fellow” and trustworthy; he was “well acquainted with the country,” and he was skillful in securing provisions for the entire group through hunting and fishing. Stephens and other members of his expedition put Smallwood’s skills to use and were pleased with his services, for he “informed me much

¹¹⁹James Oglethorpe to the Duke of Newcastle, April 17, 1736, in *OG*, 1:263-4; *EJ*, 147, April 7, 1736; An anonymous letter, April 12, 1736, in *OG*, 1:260-261.

¹²⁰James Oglethorpe to Thomas Broughton, March 28, 1736, in *OG*, 1:258.

¹²¹William Bradley to Harman Verelst, April 13, 1736, *CRG*, 21:146.

to my satisfaction concerning the various Tracts of land they had gone thro', the nature of the soils together with the Savannahs &c."¹²² When the Trustees were helping to plan the town of Darien, the Scottish settlement at Barnwell's Bluff in 1735, they suggested that Thomas Causton employ some Indians to "show them the country" to help the transplants familiarize themselves with the new land more quickly.¹²³

The Georgians frequently turned to their native neighbors for help in tracking people as well – both lost friends who hoped to be found and fugitives who hoped to stay lost. William Stephens knew that "the Indians are very dexterous in such searches" and were frequently the colony's best hope of finding missing people.¹²⁴ In this foreign and wild land, settlers like Andreas Zwifler, the Salzburghers' physician, could easily misstep and therefore frequently depended upon the charity and knowledge of the natives.¹²⁵ The tale of a young man named Habersham shows how threatening the woods could be and how easy it was to become confounded. The story actually began with another young man who journeyed with Habersham on horseback to a nearby river, and from there took a boat to Frederica. Habersham was to bring the two horses back, but he became unsure of the path and wandered into a swamp. His friend's horse would not follow him, so he tied the horse to a tree and "after much wandering and fatigue," finally managed to make it home. When Habersham went back to retrieve the horse, he took a few townspeople

¹²²*JWS*, 1:239, 248-249, June 9, 1736.

¹²³Harman Verelst to Thomas Causton, Aug. 22, 1735, *CRG*, 29:85.

¹²⁴*CRG*, 4:182, Aug. 9, 1738.

¹²⁵Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Jan. 16, 1735, in *OG*, 1:93.

with him but could not locate the animal, and thus the group wandered far and wide in search of it, becoming separated from one another. Eventually, Habersham's companions all returned to town, expecting that Habersham had done the same, to no avail. Since no one had heard from him since before the group had departed the day before, "his friends with reason began to be alarmed." As night was drawing near, however, they could do little but prepare to search the next day. To that end, "we sent to get two or three Indians ready against Morning, and several active men with horses engaged to be ready very early, by whose joint endeavours we hoped some Good would come of it." The following day, the search party set out and searched all day, with no success. "The Indians who went out with them continued abroad all night, endeavouring to find some track of him; but our Hopes began to fail of making any good discovery." Although it took three days of diligent searching, Habersham was finally rescued and brought home safe.¹²⁶

When it came to missing persons, however, the Georgians depended on the natives more often for help in finding fugitives. Just a month into the founding of the colony, James Oglethorpe had already "thought it necessary" to reward the Indians "for taking outlaws and spies."¹²⁷ In the summer of 1733, a man named Harbin was discovered sending Irish Roman Catholics "with intelligence from our town to Saint Augustine." Everyone was put on the lookout, including the native allies. In rounding up the spies, the local Indians were responsible for finding and holding two of them until

¹²⁶*CRG*, 4:181-84, Aug. 9, 1738.

¹²⁷James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, March 12, 1733, in *OG*, 1:7.

a scout boat arrived to take possession of them.¹²⁸ The following year, two men broke out of the Charleston jail and fled to the woods of Georgia, living off cattle near Musgrove's Cowpen. Again, everyone in the vicinity was put on watch, the two fugitives were located by the Indians, and the information was reported back to the Georgia magistrates. They immediately sent out a small party, headed by another Indian guide, to capture the outlaws.¹²⁹ On another occasion, plantations on the outskirts of Savannah suffered a rash of robberies; in a subsequent attempt, the criminal was discovered in the act but able to flee without being captured. William Stephens was concerned that he would not be caught, although "every Thing was done that we could think of to take the Thief," including sending for some local Indians to track the villain. Even though the Indian allies came up empty-handed this day, Stephens acknowledged that it is a task "which they are very skillful at" and was grateful that the Georgians had the Indians to call upon.¹³⁰

Sometimes the Indians were unaware of particular fugitives to be on the lookout for and could therefore only provide information retroactively. This was the case in 1740, when a Spanish prisoner and his friend, both accused of being spies, had broken out of custody and fled. Four days later, a local Indian man came into town and heard of the escape and the description of the two fugitives. He went to William Stephens to report that he had seen the two nearby and that he believed they were lurking near to wait

¹²⁸James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, May 14, 1733, in *OG*, 1:16.

¹²⁹*JPG*, 39.

¹³⁰*CRG*, 4:299, March 12, 1739.

for the clamor to die down before they continued on their path to the Spanish dominions. The Indian was certain that “it was not too late to overtake them” and offered his own personal assistance in tracking them.¹³¹

In addition to spies and outlaws, the Indians were crucial in capturing runaway servants and slaves. Even before the founding of Georgia, the southeastern Indians were “very expeditious in finding out the Negroes that frequently run away from their Masters in to the Woods.” South Carolinians actively employed them to locate African runaways. John Brickell reported in 1731 on the Indians’ proficiency at securing them, “for they never cease pursuing ‘till they destroy or hunt them out of the woods: this they will do in the tenth part time that the Europeans could do.”¹³² Since slavery was not allowed under the Trustees in Georgia, identification of runaway Negroes proved easier there than in other colonies, and there was a long-standing agreement between Georgians and the native population regarding the harboring of runaways. In an early treaty of friendship and commerce, ratified on October 18, 1733, the Lower Creek headmen promised “to apprehend & secure any Negro or other Slaves which shall run away from any of the English Settlements to our Nation” and to surrender them to the closest English garrison.¹³³ Concurrently, natives also kept vigilant for runaway servants. Stephens considered the act of running away to be “too common a Practice,” especially for

¹³¹*CRG*, 4:639, Aug. 14, 1740.

¹³²Brickell, *History*, 357.

¹³³Common council ratification of Treaty of Friendship and Commerce between James Oglethorpe and the Chief Men of the Lower Creek Nation, Oct 18, 1733, *CRG*, 32:72.

servants belonging to masters in Carolina, where he asserted they were not treated well. When servants made their escape in October, 1738, many people joined the search, including a freeholder named Galloway and “his companion, who was an Indian.”¹³⁴ Natives captured two runaway Spaniard servants in 1743 after they had made their escape via canoe, only to overturn their craft and cross paths with the Indians.¹³⁵ In 1750, two runaway servants were “delivered in to the hands of the English by the Indians in a cunning way.” A Carolina Negro slave tried his luck in escaping to Georgia, but his fortune expired when he ran into “some of our neighbouring Indians” who secured him and alerted the closet authorities.¹³⁶ After the prohibition against slavery in Georgia was revoked in 1751, the officials needed the help of the natives all the more. The 1755 version of “An Act for the better ordering and governing Negroes and other slaves in this province” provided concrete rewards for those free people, including Indians, who “shall take and secure any runaway slave.”¹³⁷ When news of the infamous Stono Rebellion – South Carolina’s largest slave rebellion in 1739 – reached Oglethorpe, he immediately took several measures for defensive and offensive patrols including having “ordered out the Indians in pursuit.”¹³⁸ Certainly, some Indians aided runaway slaves or kept them as

¹³⁴*CRG*, 4:208, Oct. 1, 1738.

¹³⁵*JWS*, 2:18, Sept. 12, 1743.

¹³⁶*DRS*, 14:31, Feb. 17, 1750; *JWS*, 2: 245, Oct. 26, 1745.

¹³⁷An Act for the better ordering and governing negroes and other slaves in this province, 1755, *CRG*, 18:137.

¹³⁸Enclosure to James Oglethorpe to the accountant Harman Verelst, Oct. 9, 1739, *CRG*, vol. 22, pt. 2:235-36 and “An account of the negroe insurrection in South Carolina” in Oglethorpe, *Publications*, 255.

their own,¹³⁹ but there is no doubt the Indians also provided a valuable service in helping to capture runaway servants and slaves throughout the colonial period, receiving gratitude again from the governor in 1768 for “delivering up the fugitive Negroes” and an earnest plea for their continued help.¹⁴⁰

Allied Indian tracking skills could also help alert the settlers when enemy Indians, not just fugitive villains, were abroad. In 1741, the first alert of any trouble brewing in an outpost area was offered by a local Indian who alerted the military officials at Mount Pleasant that “some strange Track was in those parts.” A few days later, the local lieutenant received confirmation that the tracks belonged to a band of hostile Cherokees. Because of the alert offered by the Indian, however, Thomas Hutton was able to assemble a group of allied Creeks and Yuchis to cut off the Cherokees. The early warning also allowed William Stephens, who was miles away in Savannah, to safeguard another group of returning allied Cherokees by ferrying them to Musgrove and on to their own nation without incident.¹⁴¹

Natives’ tracking skills proved useful in military endeavors as well, such as during the War of Jenkins’ Ear when the English were hopeful of finding some of St. Augustine’s outlying forts. For two days, a British detachment that included fourteen white soldiers and ten allied Indian warriors stealthily rowed from Frederica into Spanish

¹³⁹See *JWS*, 2:263, Dec. 17, 1745 and *Journal of the Upper House of Assembly*, Jan. 17, 1766, *CRG*, 17:246 for examples.

¹⁴⁰*Journal of the Upper House of Assembly*, Jan. 17, 1766, *CRG*, 17:246; *Proceedings of Governor and Council*, Sept. 6, 1768, *CRG*, 10:585.

¹⁴¹*CRG*, vol. 4, pt. 2:85-87, Feb. 7, 1741.

territory until dropping anchor in the evening. They waited in silence until the darkest hours of the night, and around “3 in the morning, our Indians went ashore.” The natives quietly scoured the area, working by the “light of the moon” looking for a hint of Spanish presence to pursue. In a short time, they discovered a footstep and could track the path the Spaniard took, tracing the enemies’ movements for four miles, ultimately discovering the prize for which they were searching: the Spanish Fort Picolata.¹⁴²

The discovery of the fort’s location was a huge boon for Oglethorpe and the Georgians and just one of the ways Indians’ scouting missions aided the British. The Indians clearly presented the best possibility of covering ground quickly and quietly and keeping a watchful eye on the colony’s enemies. Oglethorpe consistently relied on Indian patrols to scout both on land and water, knowing full well the natives had the best knowledge of the territory and the best skills for remaining undetected. If anything was amiss, they were also the best candidates to return quickly and “bring immediate Intelligence of what they discover’d.”¹⁴³ When concerns of a rupture with Spain increased towards the end of the 1730s, the white settlers in the outposts were put “on their guard” while the Yamacraws were sent “to scout about the Altamaha.”¹⁴⁴ In this instance, the move was defensive, guarding their own territory and possessions. But scouting parties frequently crossed into other dominions, such as when the British requested that the Indians travel down the St. Johns River to determine what

¹⁴²Thomas Eyre to his brother, Dec. 23, 1739, in *OG*, 2:422-23.

¹⁴³*JWS*, 2:219, April 25, 1745.

¹⁴⁴Patrick Mackay to Thomas Causton, March 27, 1735, in *OG*, 1:146.

preparations, if any, the Spaniards were making for war. If during their scouting mission the natives discovered that the Spanish were on the march, they were to immediately send a messenger to the Indian agent within the Creek Nation so that he could raise a militia to counter.¹⁴⁵

During the siege of St. Augustine and the resulting defense against the Spanish invasion, Indian scouts were in high demand and an invaluable component of the British war effort.¹⁴⁶ They frequently sent “parties of Indians out to scour the country and to bring us in intelligence,” often covering territory completely unknown to the British.¹⁴⁷ After a battle, the Indian scout troops were utilized by advancing on the target to ascertain casualties, current strength, and potential resistance.¹⁴⁸

In times of peace as well, the Indians kept a watchful eye on the territory, as routine scouting parties continued.¹⁴⁹ In 1734, Georgian-allied Indians stopped a group of Spaniards and Spanish Indians on St. Simons Island to “enquire what business they had there.”¹⁵⁰ Any unusual threat could be surveyed by the Indians, such as when William Stephens requested their help in 1745. When a couple of boats appeared

¹⁴⁵Samuel Eveleigh to Thomas Causton, March 18, 1736, *CRG*, 21:381.

¹⁴⁶Sweet, *Negotiating for Georgia*, 142.

¹⁴⁷Thomas Eyre to his brother, Dec. 23, 1739, in *OG*, 2:422.

¹⁴⁸James Oglethorpe to the Duke of Newcastle, 1742, in *OG*, 2:622.

¹⁴⁹Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Nov. 20, 1735, *CRG*, 21:58; Mark Carr to James Campbell, Jan. 28, 1740, in *OG*, 2:446.

¹⁵⁰Samuel Eveleigh to James Oglethorpe, Aug. 5, 1734, *CRG*, 20:66.

anchored in a tidal harbor, he sent “50 able Indians, with one white man” to determine who they belonged to and the meaning of their presence.¹⁵¹

In times of war, the allied Indian forces could be employed as mercenaries, but they frequently had their own motivations and values governing their allegiance. As early as 1733, Oglethorpe organized about forty willing Yamacraws into two militia units. They received a gun when they entered the service, one blanket each year, and one bushel of corn per month.¹⁵² During the War of Jenkins’ Ear, the siege of St. Augustine, and the subsequent Spanish reprisals, Indians from many of the southeastern tribes were employed as soldiers. Oglethorpe frequently requested approval for funding from the Trustees to help defray “the Charge of Indians & others going to War with ye Spaniards at Augustine.” This included supplying the Indians with “arms, ammunition and necessaries, in order to keep them in readiness against the Spanish invasion” and paying for those who led the Indian troops, without which, Oglethorpe claimed, “we shall lye entirely open to the Insults of the Spanish Horse and Indians upon the Continent.”¹⁵³

When the Seven Years’ War erupted in 1756, the British tried to hold fast to their native allies. For the most part, the Creeks remained loyal, and in an April 1757 meeting with some Lower Creek chiefs, the governor encouraged his Indian allies to war against the French. He urged them to bring in live prisoners, for certainly “the English were

¹⁵¹*JWS*, 2:219, April 25, 1745.

¹⁵²James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, June 9, 1733, *CRG*, 20:23.

¹⁵³James Oglethorpe to George Heathcote, Nov. 20, 1738, in *OG*, 2:365; James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, Oct. 20, 1739, *CRG*, vol. 22, pt. 2:252; Thomas Jones to Harman Verelst, Feb. 21, 1743, *CRG*, 23:493.

warriors, but did not delight in blood.” At the same time, however, he offered an allowance for French scalps as well, willing to pay half the value of those rewards offered for prisoners.¹⁵⁴ During this international conflict, the British attempted to hold onto some of their other tenuous Indian allies, but war between the British and the Cherokees ultimately erupted in 1759. During the Cherokee War, a subset of the Seven Years’ War, friendly Indian allies were employed to deliver Cherokee scalps. Included in the reward for every enemy scalp were three pounds of powder, six pounds of shot, a blanket, a pair of Indian boots, and a keg of rum. The board approved of the significant reward as “a matter of expediency.”¹⁵⁵ Another offer promised a “reward of Near five pounds sterling in goods for every Cherokee scalp brought in by a Creek or Chickasaw Indian.”¹⁵⁶ In April 1760, the governor had a conference with some Creek Indians just then returning from war to thank them for proving their friendship to the British by “being the first of their People who had shed the blood of Cherokees.” The Creeks proudly relinquished three Cherokee scalps.¹⁵⁷ Members of the Chickasaw and Yuchi tribe began bringing in scalps of British enemies shortly thereafter.¹⁵⁸ In the fall of that

¹⁵⁴Proceedings of the Governor and Council, April 1757, *CRG*, 7:546.

¹⁵⁵Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Feb. 9, 1760, *CRG*, 8:248.

¹⁵⁶Journal of the Upper House of Assembly, *CRG*, 16:435, Feb. 12, 1760.

¹⁵⁷Proceedings of the Governor and Council, April 17, 1760, *CRG*, 8:285; Proceedings of the President and Council, April 14, 1760, *CRG*, 8:284.

¹⁵⁸Proceedings of the Governor and Council, May 20, 1760, *CRG*, 8:312.

year, even some of the distant Choctaws made an overture to the English when a group of ten arrived in Savannah and brought a French scalp with them “as a token of peace.”¹⁵⁹

* * * * *

The British needed to be careful in employing their Indian allies in this fashion, however, for the Indians operated under their own set of cultural values that portrayed honor and glory, and they most often served as mercenaries for their own reasons. In times of peace, it could be very difficult to restrain the Indian allies, difficult to get them to conform to European concepts of honor and proper protocol, and even in times of war, trying to get them to adhere to a European concept of what was permissible on the battlefield. Indian culture celebrated warfare, but depended upon the revenge principle which most often necessitated killings, not prisoners, and reveled in the brutality of it. Many of the British-allied Indians could not understand when Oglethorpe or other Georgia officials reined in the exuberance of the Indian allies. When a small British detachment was working on fortifications at Thunderbolt in March 1735, the allied Indians with them inquired for what purpose they made such a strong defense. When the Georgians answered that it was to protect them from the Spanish, the Indians replied that if they were “afraid of that, they would at any time go and fetch all the Spanish Indians’ scalps to us.” The commander had to politely tell them no, explaining that “if they did us no hurt, we should do no harm to them.”¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Oct. 20, 1760, *CRG*, 8:394.

¹⁶⁰Joseph Herrington to James Oglethorpe, March 22, 1735, in *OG*, 1:139.

Nothing proves the fact that the Indians would work under their own preconceptions and motivations more than the fact that the Georgia officials had to patrol their own Indian allies. Especially in the early years of the colony when Spain was disputing the English border, Georgia had to keep a very close eye on its allied Indians. From the first time the Yamacraws took James Oglethorpe on an exploration of their lands and they spied on the Spanish guard on the south side of the St. John's River, Georgia officials had difficulty ensuring that their Indians would not act independently. Tomochichi contended at the time that the Spanish outguards were settled on land that belonged to the Creeks, and he therefore desired to drive them back to the outer limits of their dominions at St. Augustine. It was only with "much difficulty" that Oglethorpe was able to dissuade his Indian friend from this plan.¹⁶¹ To ensure that British-allied Indian attacks did not occur in his absence either, he was required to set up a patrol along the river to keep the Creeks from passing into the Spanish territory.¹⁶² The Trustees especially approved of this move, hopeful that the patrol and using caution would avoid "anything that may occasion a rupture or misunderstanding between the two crowns on account of Indian claims."¹⁶³ The fledgling colony did not want to be responsible for starting a major international crisis. The Trustees warned the Georgia magistrates again

¹⁶¹James Oglethorpe to Thomas Broughton, Lt Governor of South Carolina, March 28, 1736, *CRG*, 21:122.

¹⁶²*Ibid*; An anonymous letter from Frederica, April 12, 1736, in *OG*, 1:262; Benjamin Martin to Andrew Stone, secretary to the Duke of Newcastle, Sept. 5, 1739, *CRG*, 30:86.

¹⁶³Benjamin Martyn to Secretary of State Lord Harrington, June 10, 1736, *CRG*, 29:138.

the following year to be “very careful to avoid the beginning of Hostilities, and to prevent the Indians from giving offense by their inclinations of falling on the Spaniards, or Spanish Indians being in the least pursued.”¹⁶⁴ This warning came on the heels of news that South Carolina had sent the Creeks to engage the Spanish Indians so that the latter could not join in with the Spaniards. This move concerned many Georgians greatly, for they understood that “it is hard to restrain our Indians” from assailing the Spaniards, which would, of course, give Spain the chance to say that the British “were first who broke the late treaty.”¹⁶⁵

Many Indian allies were disgruntled by Oglethorpe’s restraint and would have acted independently if the opportunity arose. Charles Wesley reported in 1736 that “the Indians in our allyance ... are mortal Enemies to the Spaniards” and, regardless of Georgia’s position, wanted to be able to act independently according to their own political goals. Many Indian allies refused to accompany Oglethorpe into Spanish contested lands “because he refused to let them attack and kill them.”¹⁶⁶

For this and many other reasons, Indian military recruits usually benefitted from having someone “conduct them down” from the nations. Just as those on diplomatic missions to meet with governors and other Georgia magistrates, those Indians traveling to join the fight or meet up with military officers had colonial companions approved of by the colony to recruit and transport the Indian soldiers. This ensured them safer passage,

¹⁶⁴Harman Verelst to Thomas Causton, March 23, 1737, *CRG*, 29:183.

¹⁶⁵*EJ*, 248, March 23, 1737.

¹⁶⁶*EJ*, 219, Dec. 1, 1736.

an easier reception in town, and provisions along the way. Those with the responsibility of conducting the Indians to the warfront were often military officers, frequently traders or others who had business within the Indian nation, or sometimes simple freeholders who were available for the duty.¹⁶⁷

It is perhaps therefore not surprising that most often those found working together in military alliances were those Indians and whites who also worked or lived together in the nation. When Thomas Eyre headed down from the Cherokee nation bringing recruits to join General Oglethorpe in Frederica in 1740, he had in tow not only “a certain number of Indians, but also twenty white Men “to go on immediate service under the general.”¹⁶⁸ Likewise, a small group of eleven Cherokee and nine Chickasaws arrived in Savannah on their way to join the campaign against the Spaniards, and the entire lot of them, including “their conductors and a few other white Men that accompanied them out of their Nations” were put aboard a small sloop, and sent on their way.¹⁶⁹ Even if from different cultures, those men who had already formed tight bonds within Indian country would have lived, worked, and often stood to fight and defend together.

The mixed groups of soldiers that came out of the Indian nation were often led by white officers, those given commissions to recruit and conduct their men on the battlefield. Many of these “officers” were commissioned in time of war because of their status among the Indians; most were traders who lived in the Indian nations. Their first

¹⁶⁷See for example “Enclosure of an abstract from my journals,” in *OG*, 2: 506, Journal entry April 30, 1740, *CRG*, 4:563; *JWS*, 1:199, May 3, 1743.

¹⁶⁸*CRG*, 4:552, April 12, 1740.

¹⁶⁹*CRG*, 4:590, June 7, 1740.

order of business was to raise support and military numbers among the nations and then escort soldiers to the British army. During the siege of St. Augustine, for example, Oglethorpe made certain that each Indian tribe had its own commissioned representative among them to recruit warriors and transport them to the General's encampment. Thomas Eyre received his commission as agent among the Cherokees on September 29, 1739, with instructions to "make the best of my way directly to that Nation and demand their assistance against the Spaniards."¹⁷⁰ He was also to deliver other commissions throughout the Indian nations during his travels, commissioning Samuel Brown and Thomas Holmes among the Cherokees, and authorizing William Gray to "bring down as many of the Ucheese and Chickesaws who live about Augusta as possible."¹⁷¹ All four were trusted traders in their respective vicinities. Oglethorpe expected that each commissioned officer would be able to recruit a large number of Indian allies, hopeful for a "considerable body," at least several hundred, and expecting each officer to "march at the Head of them."¹⁷² When the recruitments did not appear quickly enough for Oglethorpe's liking, Eyre was "dispatched back again to the Indian nation with orders to make all the expedition possible down with the Indians."¹⁷³ Finally, in early April, Stephens received notice that Eyre was on his way down from the Cherokee nation,

¹⁷⁰"Enclosure of an abstract from my journals," in *OG*, 2: 505; *CRG*, 5:276; Dec. 18, 1739.

¹⁷¹"Enclosure of an abstract from my journals," in *OG*, 2:506.

¹⁷²*CRG*, 4:424, Sept. 25-29, 1739.

¹⁷³Thomas Eyre to Robert Eyre, Dec. 9, 1739, in *OG*, 2:426; *CRG*, 5: 277, Dec. 29, 1739.

bringing close to a hundred Cherokee warriors to join the British ranks. In addition, however, he also secured about seventy Chickasaws and twenty white volunteers, plus brought news that several hundred Creeks were preparing to join him as well.¹⁷⁴

Even those Indian allies who made it in to Savannah on their own were usually accompanied the final distance by a white escort. In 1739, a group of Chickasaws and Yuchis having arrived from Augusta in November, ‘refreshed themselves’ in Savannah for a few days and then made their way south to the General “under the conduct of Lieutenant Dunbar.”¹⁷⁵ Williams Stephens made sure the Wolf and his companions arrived safely in Frederica from Savannah under the protection of Lieutenant Kent in June 1741.

During the Spanish border conflict, Oglethorpe attempted to integrate his Indian and white forces, most likely to the detriment of his campaign and perhaps even the relationship between the two groups. Instead of capitalizing on Indians’ skills and employing their guerilla tactics, Oglethorpe attempted to incorporate the warriors into the rank and file. Not surprisingly, officers condemned the Indians as poor soldiers because they were not willing to follow orders or directions, which were most likely foreign concepts to the Indians. Officers complained that the Indians were “not fit for entering breaches or trenches, or besieging a town regularly.” By the lieutenant’s own admission,

¹⁷⁴*CRG*, 4:55, April 9, 1740; *CRG*, 4:552, April 12, 1740. They arrived on April 15 in Savannah and departed with “sufficient provisions for them on their passage” on the 18th. See *CRG*, 4:553, April 15, 1740, 556, April 18, 1740.

¹⁷⁵*CRG*, vol. 4, pt. 2:162, June 9, 1741; *CRG*, 4:460, Nov. 28, 1739.

however, the Indians were successful when employed in a traditional manner: “to fight against Indians, & to waste the Spanish Plantations.”¹⁷⁶

On the battlefield, the integration of white officers and Indian troops was a mixed success. Despite Samuel Eveleigh’s claim that “ye indian fight best when headed by ye white people,”¹⁷⁷ the Indian allies sometimes chafed under their command. Usually, the problem was not a dislike or disregard for one another, but rather a difference in strategies and tactics. The Indians had their own reasons for joining the fight against British enemies; they also had their own goals, rewards, and definitions of success that did not coincide with colonial perspectives. The natives were hoping for quick attacks, definitive victories, and rewards in the form of goods and prisoners. The long siege and uncertain victories were tedious to the Indians, and Oglethorpe and other commanders frequently tried to impose colonial cultural values on the Indian allies and discourage native warfare practices. Thus, employing the Indians as rank and file allies was not especially fruitful for the Georgians.¹⁷⁸

At other times, the British promoted from within the Indian ranks, granting commissions to Indians and allowing them to lead their own people in battle. As early as April 1733, Oglethorpe gave captain’s commissions to two of Tomochichi’s chief Indian warriors to lead the Indian allies. Tuskenca and Skee therefore headed up two companies

¹⁷⁶*CRG*, 5:349, May 9, 1740.

¹⁷⁷Samuel Eveleigh to Thomas Causton, March 18, 1736, *CRG*, 21:382.

¹⁷⁸For a thorough examination of Oglethorpe’s Indian allies in the War of Jenkins’ Ear, see Sweet, *Negotiating for Georgia*, ch. 9.

of about forty men.¹⁷⁹ Unfortunately, we do not know much about the use or success of this militia, and both men were dead by the end of 1735. Upon news of Skee's death in September, the Trustees bewailed "the loss of so bold a warrior," seeing his death as a "very great detriment to the province." They felt he had already proven his worth for he "had been and would have continued of the utmost service upon the Spanish frontiers."¹⁸⁰ The Trustees were still paying bills to the "armed companies" of Indians in 1740;¹⁸¹ in 1741 the magistrates were looking to find enough horses to remount the Indians; and in 1745 they were paying bills for repairing arms for the Indians who "are engaged in his majesty's service" at Frederica.¹⁸² After the unsuccessful siege of St. Augustine in 1740, Oglethorpe reverted to allowing his Indian allies to use their guerilla warfare to the best advantage – striking quickly, reaping rewards, and instilling fear in the Spaniards – hoping to limit their mobility. The Indian allies had their desired effect, "for by them the Spaniards of Augustine were miserable harassed, hardly daring to stir out."¹⁸³ During the Seven Years' War, other commissions were granted, including one to a head man named Accouthla in 1757.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁹James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, June 9, 1733, *CRG*, 20:23.

¹⁸⁰Common council instructions of the bailiffs and recorder of Savannah in the case of Joseph Watson, *CRG*, 32:113.

¹⁸¹Minutes of the Common Council, *CRG*, 2:332; Harman Verelst to James Oglethorpe, June 11, 1740, *CRG*, 30:136.

¹⁸²Minutes of the Common Council, Feb. 23, 1745, *CRG*, 2:446.

¹⁸³Sweet, *Negotiating for Georgia*, 148; Journal entry May 29, 1741, *CRG*, 4 supplement:154.

¹⁸⁴Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Feb. 25, 1757, *CRG*, 7:494.

The most useful Indian captain of the period, however, was Captain Alleck. Alleck had earned a captaincy and was best known by the name that incorporated his title. He was a leading man in the Creek community for much of the eighteenth century and made himself known within white circles as well, playing a prominent role, especially in the 1750s and 1760s. Very little of his lineage or early years is known, but he claims to have lived the majority of his life among both natives and whites and purported to be a life-long English ally.¹⁸⁵ Alleck was already a chief in 1729 when he “married three Yuchi women and persuaded some of the Yuchi Indians to move over among the Lower Creeks.”¹⁸⁶ In 1735, he was listed as a “chief man [who] lives at Ewchee Town,” though he was not referenced with his title. At that time, he was included among the list of Creek chiefs whom Tomochichi suggested should receive presents from the Georgians when they were hoping to establish a favorable alliance between the new colony and the Creek headmen.¹⁸⁷ He had his captain’s commission by 1749, when the president of the colony proclaimed that he “has always been a Friend to the English.”¹⁸⁸ As the Seven Years’ War loomed, Alleck’s intermediary skills came to the forefront. Before the war was officially declared, Alleck met with Governor John Reynolds to alert him that both the French and Spanish were actively courting the

¹⁸⁵*SRNC*, 10:179; *CRG*, 7:566, Oct. 18, 1757. In this meeting with Governor Ellis, Alleck stated “he had been brought up amongst the White People from his Youth.”

¹⁸⁶John R. Swanton, *The Indian Tribes of North America* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1952), 118.

¹⁸⁷Thomas Causton to Patrick Mackay, April 10, 1735, *CRG*, 20:316.

¹⁸⁸Proceedings of the President, Aug. 22, 1749, *CRG*, 6:283.

Creeks, and that their entreaties were meeting with some success.¹⁸⁹ It was after the war had erupted, however, that Alleck served as a crucial intermediary. In 1757, Alleck's brother Will and a few other Creek friends were visiting the captain at his plantation and expressed an interest in meeting the Georgia governor. In addition, the Creeks from within the nation had heard rumors and wanted to determine their veracity. Alleck therefore arranged a meeting with Governor Henry Ellis; Alleck translated and informed the governor that Will did not meet with him as an agent authorized by the Creek headman, but that many people in the Creek territory had heard similar stories and wondered if they were true, and Will would be happy to find out the answer and report back to the nation at large.¹⁹⁰

Alleck reported that the Cherokees were joining with the French and had encouraged the Creeks to do so as well. The rumor was that the Cherokees were upset by the British who had recently built a fort in their territory and that the British coveted Cherokee lands. Governor Ellis responded that the fort had been built at the Cherokees' request, but that relations had been strained during the last year. Recently, however, the Cherokee headmen had visited Charles Town and the "Chain of Friendship was then made bright between them and us." In fact, contrary to reports of their joining the French, the Cherokees had recently sent a hundred warriors against the French "to cement their alliance with the English." The governor continued by proclaiming that the French had evil intentions of driving off the Indians and taking their lands, and he

¹⁸⁹Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Nov. 12, 1754, *CRG*, 7:33.

¹⁹⁰Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Oct. 18, 1757, *CRG*, 7:566-7.

cautioned his audience that they should remain fast friends with “none but the English.” He concluded by offering rewards for French scalps and prisoners. When the governor concluded his speech, Alleck said his brother promised to carry the talk back to the nation and let the Creeks know the truth of the situation.¹⁹¹

At some point during his 1757-1760 administration, Governor Ellis promised Alleck a reward of thirty head of cattle “in consideration of services performed by him at the Request of Governor Ellis in Time of the Indian Alarm.”¹⁹² Whether the tasks involved delivering the above message or additional errands is unclear. Apparently later government officials appreciated Alleck’s service to the extent that they remembered what assistance he had offered, agreeing that he had served a useful purpose during the war and rewarded him retroactively.¹⁹³

At the close of the war, Alleck was present at both Indian conferences – the Augusta conference in 1763 and the Pensacola Conference in 1765 and was on Superintendent John Stuart’s short list for a “lesser medal.”¹⁹⁴ One of the stipulations agreed upon at Augusta was the settling of a new Indian boundary, and in 1766, Captain Alleck served as the sole Creek representative to work with the Georgia magistrates to establish the limits of the Creek hunting grounds and to be present in running the new

¹⁹¹Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Oct. 18, 1757, *CRG*, 7:567-8.

¹⁹²Journal of the Upper House of Assembly, Jan. 17, 1766, *CRG*, 17:247.

¹⁹³Proceedings of the Governor and Council, April 1, 1766, *CRG*, 9:510.

¹⁹⁴Copy of John Stuart to James Wright, July 25, 1765, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 2:113.

line.¹⁹⁵ The headmen had granted him this authority at a conference at Picolata, and the ensuing agreement allowed the new boundary to be drawn at “the Lower Trading path leading from Mount Pleasant to Ogechee and from thence in a straight line to Turkey Creek on the South side of the Altamaha.”¹⁹⁶ Once the new line was agreed upon, Governor James Wright sent Alleck to the Creek Nation to bring them a copy of the agreement and ensure that they agreed with all that transpired.¹⁹⁷ He was also involved that year in negotiating between the two cultures when some whites were murdered by renegade Creeks. Alleck ensured that both parties approved of the “satisfaction for the Murders.”¹⁹⁸

On the eve of the American Revolution, Captain Alleck’s services as an intermediary were still a useful component of British-Creek relations. When another murder occurred in 1771 just a few miles away from Galphin’s cowpen, Captain Alleck served as both witness and messenger. The murderer was a renegade Creek who had just spent the night at the home of the victim, a white man named Carey. According to Galphin and Alleck, Carey and his family had been very hospitable, and “there was no provocation given the Indian that killed the man.” After Galphin organized an unsuccessful search for the murderer, his next course of action was to write to the Creek headmen, alerting them that there had been a murder, warning them that the murderer

¹⁹⁵Journal of the Upper House of Assembly, Jan. 17, 1766, *CRG*, 17:246-47.

¹⁹⁶Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Oct. 7, 1766, *CRG*, 9:666-67.

¹⁹⁷Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Sept. 5, 1768, *CRG*, 10:576.

¹⁹⁸Journal of the Upper House of Assembly, Jan. 17, 1766, *CRG*, 17:247.

was intent on killing another white man, and reminding them that the governor would require satisfaction for any harm done to any Georgia settler. Galphin offered his advice on the best course of action for the Creek chiefs and sent Alleck to deliver the important message.¹⁹⁹

The outline of other natives willing to help broker exchanges sheds further light on the important roles these people played in helping the communities to coexist. In the earliest years of the colony, the Yamacraws were the preeminent group that brought the English together with the natives. Tomochichi and, to a lesser extent, his nephew Toonahowi and the extended family, were all important in initiating positive relations with the newcomers and keeping the Creeks tightly aligned with the Georgia settlement. But there were additional chiefs within the larger Creek nation who worked diligently on interrelations, such as the Dog King of Uphalies, who worked to extend the alliance to other tribes, serving as a mediator to the more-distant Choctaws as well. In 1734, he accompanied trader Thomas Jones to secure peace with the Choctaws. They went on a campaign to canvas the whole nation to make sure the headmen of every town had notification that the English hoped to meet with them and formulate an alliance. This was the first significant inroads the English had made with the Choctaws, as South Carolina's attempts had failed to impress.²⁰⁰ After the Choctaw headmen agreed to meet with the governor in Savannah, Thomas Jones went on ahead to prepare for them. The

¹⁹⁹Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Dec. 9, 1771, *CRG*, 12:151-52.

²⁰⁰Mary Musgrove to James Oglethorpe, July 17, 1734, in *OG*, 1:44.

Creek chief was the one who conducted them from the Indian nation to the capital city.²⁰¹ In the wake of that diplomatic meeting, the Dog King was in a position to hear about the French response to the news upon the Choctaws' return and gauge what the outcome would be for the English. He reported that the Choctaws complained to the French about poor supplies and that they threatened to abandon the French for the English. Ultimately, however, the Dog King was not optimistic that the Choctaws would ally with the English, for the French successfully kept them under their control "by promises and threats."²⁰²

The Dog King's preeminence as a figure important in the mediation between the natives and the English was marked by his appearance on Tomochichi's list of head chiefs worthy of receiving a portion of the Trustees' presents in 1735,²⁰³ and by the support shown him by the magistrates when he made a complaint against a white settler in 1737. When a dispute arose between the Dog King and a white neighbor over cattle, not only did Thomas Causton demand that the settler "make him satisfaction for the injuries you have done him," but also employed the nearest military officer to ensure that restitution was made.²⁰⁴ That same year, the Dog King was invited by the Spanish to come to St. Augustine; the Indian told Causton and volunteered to go in order to see if they were preparing for war.²⁰⁵ The following year, rumors erupted in the Creek nation

²⁰¹Patrick Mackay to the Trustees, March 23, 1735, *CRG*, 20:280.

²⁰²Patrick Mackay to the Trustees, March 28, 1735, in *OG*, 1:150.

²⁰³Thomas Causton to Patrick Mackay, April 10, 1735, *CRG*, 20:318.

²⁰⁴Thomas Causton to Alex Wood, Jan. 12, 1737, *CRG*, 21:303; Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Jan. 12, 1737, *CRG*, 21:304.

²⁰⁵Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Feb. 24, 1737, *CRG*, 21:314.

that there was a plot to “cut off all the white people who lived among them.” Warnings came in from traders and military officers in the backcountry, but they also cautioned that they might not be true, for the French frequently started such rumors “in order to deter our Traders from going up to them.” In order to know the truth of the situation, the Georgians turned to the Dog King, at home in his upper Creek town on the frontier. The chief reassured the British representatives, dismissing the rumors as false. The Creeks would never ally with the French, he assured them, but “die with the English.”²⁰⁶

After being consistently involved in the interrelations between the Indians and the English throughout the 1730s, the Dog King does not reappear. Did he die? Did he lose prestige or authority and therefore the ability to influence relations between the two cultures? Or were there simply other Indians concurrently in the position to mediate relations who therefore assumed center stage?

One who did become more active in the Dog King’s wake was a leader known as the Wolf or the Wolf King. There are a few brief mentions of him in the 1740s,²⁰⁷ but he was at the peak of his influence during the Seven Years’ War and its surrounding crises. Governor Ellis had invited the Upper and Lower Creek chiefs to meet with him, and they arrived in Savannah on October 27, 1757. Part of a large contingent representing over twenty towns, the Wolf King acted “as speaker for the whole” at the initial introductions.²⁰⁸ When the meeting reconvened on November 3, a few different

²⁰⁶Journal entry Dec. 6, 1738, *CRG*, 4: 241 and Journal entry, March 16, 1739, *CRG*, 5:138.

²⁰⁷John Dobell to the Trustees, Oct. 29, 1745, *CRG*, 24:432; Adair, *History*, 297.

²⁰⁸Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Oct. 27, 1757, *CRG*, 7:644.

headmen, including the Wolf King, spoke during the course of the event, signifying their approval of the treaty and the conversation. But it was the Wolf King who addressed his own people, cautioning them to remember the articles of friendship and the terms explained to them that day. Warning that if any of the headmen present should break the treaty, the Wolf King would be the first to call him out in the public square: “I am the man that will call him a liar and the rest of you shall confirm it.”²⁰⁹ When representatives from two more Creek towns arrived late on November 7, the Wolf King and one other headman joined the late arrivals when Ellis went over the treaty with them, and witnessed their concurrence and the making of their marks to the treaty. He was also one of the chiefs given a written copy of the agreement to carry into his nation so that it could be read there in the public square.²¹⁰ In April 1760, he was involved in trying to secure the return of some English prisoners from the Cherokees and the French, promising that “he himself would go to the French and demand the prisoners,” although another headman, the Gun Merchant, ultimately secured their release.²¹¹ Like other native brokers, he also delivered messages for the officials, carrying and delivering talks from the governors and other Indian groups.²¹²

²⁰⁹Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Nov. 3, 1757, *CRG*, 7:664.

²¹⁰Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Nov. 7, 1757, *CRG*, 7:668.

²¹¹Proceedings of the Governor and Council, May 20, 1760, *CRG*, 8:308; Proceedings of the Governor and Council, March 3, 1761, *CRG*, 8:514.

²¹²Proceedings of the Governor and Council, July 28, 1761, *CRG*, 8:542; Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Nov. 7, 1757, *CRG*, 7:668.

But arguably his most important act as a mediator of intercultural relations occurred during the trader massacre among the Creeks in 1760. When members of some of the Upper Creek towns defected to the French under the Great Mortar, they initiated an attempt to wipe out all whites in their country. The Wolf King lived just two miles from the French Alabama Fort, and many of the traders who had survived the initial massacre were seeking refuge. "A considerable number" made it safely to his house, where "the faithful stern chieftain treated them with the greatest kindness." But being so close to the French, and having only forty warriors in his town, the Wolf King did not believe his house would be a suitable refuge and did what he could to move the whites out of the area to safety. He provided them with guns, ammunition, and other necessities before leading them to a thick swamp where they could hide until he could convey them to a friendly town and then on to Savannah.²¹³ He was also personally responsible in the following months for appointing particular people in the nation to "take care of and preserve in safety the Traders in his towns" and swore that his people and other British-allied Creeks in the area knew nothing of the planned massacre "til it was too late." At the same time, however, he was quick to point out that the Georgians did not always seem appreciative of the natives' efforts on their behalf, for when they delivered the traders and packhorsemen safe and sound, "the people of Augusta took no notice of them, but suffered them to return home without any recompense which he thought was hard usage, and desired that his Honour would represent the same to the Storekeepers at

²¹³Adair, *History*, 280-81; Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Jan. 29, 1761, *CRG*, 8:470.

Augusta.”²¹⁴ Those who bridged two cultures did not have to sell one out for the sake of the other, but stood to represent the rights of both – in this case, the protection of the traders and the natives’ deserved recognition for it. At the very least, Superintendent John Stuart recognized the Wolf King’s efforts on behalf of sustaining good relations between the two cultures and rewarded him by making him a Medal Chief, one of only five Upper Creek headmen to receive a “great medal” at the 1765 Indian congress.²¹⁵

Captain Alleck and the Wolf King both made lifetime careers of mediating between the Creeks and the British. In the grand scheme of things, however, their work was just a minor part. Cultural exchanges were not dependent on one man or even a few select people; Captain Alleck, for instance, did not have to be at every exchange in order for the cultures to work out an understanding of the other. Native cultural brokers came and went, some playing important roles for decades, others being the impetus for exchange on a more limited scale. Some like the Dog King rose to prominence in the colony’s early years, others shone during times of crises like the Wolf King. When they disappeared from the record, some had passed away, some carried on their lives in uneventful ways, and sometimes the events occurred but just did not make it into the records. Regardless, the many isolated events of cultural brokerage suggest that many more were occurring than what is recoverable from the sources. The chances are if a native worked to broker relations between the two groups at any one time, he frequently did so. There are numerous instances of individual Indians using their influence to

²¹⁴Proceedings of the Governor and Council Jan. 29, 1761, *CRG*, 8:469-70.

²¹⁵Copy of John Stuart to James Wright, July 25, 1765, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 2:113.

convince native leaders to treat with Georgia officials. The traders frequently told the Georgia magistrates that it was “entirely through his influence,” the power of persuasion by one or two individuals, that permitted the diplomatic talks to even take place.²¹⁶ There are multiple records of Indians setting the story straight or forcing the larger Creek body to wait to hear proof of a certain situation before acting. In one such instance, one intermediary met with two or three Indians who “came down intending on killing some of the English.” He reasoned with them at length, told them “he was sure the Heads of the nation gave no such talk,” and “sent them away quiet and satisfied.”²¹⁷

The many instances of natives interceding to help negotiate between cultures is varied both in terms of the individuals and the ways in which they brokered the exchange. Settlement Indians, traders’ Indians, and Indians belonging to the larger nations all interacted with the Georgians throughout the entire colonial period. Natives shared their food, their knowledge, and their talents with their white neighbors. They helped to cure ailments, determine geographical boundaries, and familiarize the colonists with their new homeland. During times of alarm, they offered their protection, their aid in hunting down fugitives, and their alliance. They were an incomparable source of military intelligence, both in terms of friends and enemies, Europeans and natives. Rarely, however, did these native cultural brokers submerge their own best interests or the interests of their own culture. They did not fawn over the British, acquiescing to their

²¹⁶See for example Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Nov. 18, 1749, *CRG*, 6:297.

²¹⁷Proceedings of the Governor and Council, Sept. 12, 1757, *CRG*, 7:628.

every demand. Instead, they truly mediated between the two cultures, providing a service or information that would benefit both. When the Wolf King helped to shield the English traders from the French massacre, he did so with a genuine concern for his English friends. Once the crisis had passed, however, he depended on the fact that his sacrifice would garner him the ability to voice some complaints against the British and negotiate some change. He was discouraged over Indian-trader relations and used the opportunity not only to tell the governor of his concerns but also to strongly suggest that the governor require some accountability from the Augusta storekeepers as well. In this manner, Indian intermediaries such as the Wolf King continued to represent their native cultures while simultaneously being an “old steady friend” to the whites, truly the mark of a successful cultural broker.²¹⁸

²¹⁸Adair, *History*, 297.

Chapter 3
“Perfectly Acquainted with the Country”:
Military Personnel on the Georgia Frontier

When Georgia was founded by the British in 1733, other European nations already had a strong presence in the Southeast. The French were thriving in Louisiana, dominated the Mississippi River, and had a well-established presence among the Creeks at Fort Toulouse, also known as the Alabama fort. The Spanish historically claimed much of the Southeast since the 1500s by right of discovery and conquest. Since the founding of Charles Town in 1670, the area from the coastal islands of Georgia to the Saint John’s River, just north of St. Augustine, had been sharply contested by both Britain and Spain. Consequently, South Carolinians were eager to have an additional colony settled in the territory, not only to enforce British claims to the area, but especially to serve as a military buffer. In addition to threats from the Spanish and French, South Carolina had also been involved in its share of Indian wars, and a military respite would be a welcome change for the colony.

With Georgia established as a military buffer, military personnel obviously had a strong presence in the colony. Not only did they influence the colony’s history with their actions against European challengers, they greatly affected the colony’s native relations. Along with the traders, military personnel were some of the few British representatives

living near or among the Indians. They therefore served as important diplomatic links who could provide information, safely transport members of one society across the borders of the other, and settle disputes or calm conflicts that arose between whites and natives. They were also in charge of the recruitment and direction of Indian allies in times of war. All of these services meant that military men were an important part of native-European interaction in Georgia.

Second only to the actual establishment of the settlement at Savannah, the need for a strong defense was foremost on the new settlers' minds. The Georgia colonists had arrived in the new world "with but forty persons able to bear arms." Fortunately, South Carolina had been supportive of the endeavor since the outset, noticeably aware that a buffer colony between that English colony and its European and native rivals would be in its best interest. A portion of those South Carolina rangers patrolling the colony's southernmost frontier were consequently reallocated to help the Georgians establish and defend the new colony.¹

South Carolina's Rangers were a small but extremely effective force who patrolled the backcountry on horseback. Comprised of no more than one hundred men collectively, the three companies of rangers were intimately familiar with the frontier and its geography, culture, and inhabitants. Activated in 1728, the southern rangers had years of experience patrolling the swamps and forests that surrounded the local waterways. Their tenure was unusually long, often averaging several years rather than the short

¹James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, Dec. 1733, in *OG*, 1:27; Governor and Council of South Carolina to James Oglethorpe, Jan. 26, 1733, *EM*, 14200:21.

enlistment of a typical frontier soldier, which afforded them the advantage of experience. For at least one year, the company was augmented by a Kiawah chief named Harry and ten of his warriors. The South Carolina Rangers not only served as the model of defense for Georgia,² but many of the South Carolina veterans were employed in the common defense of both colonies on the southern frontier. Like the Indians, the rangers could cover vast territory quickly and effectively, rode on horseback through the woods with ease, and were excellent marksmen and stealthy trackers. Oglethorpe claimed that they were as “contented in woods as in houses.” It was clear that they understood the basics of Indian warfare and used it as their primary method.³

Unfortunately, some of the names and most of the stories of the rangers have been lost. Like other colonial frontier soldiers, their days were probably filled with mostly tedious chores, guard duty, and procuring and preparing meals. In their remote posts, they probably suffered from bouts of loneliness and boredom and frequently over-imbibed in alcohol.⁴ If a ranger’s fort was located in close proximity to an Indian village, the chances he could find some female companionship were good. The Palachacola garrison, for example, was located directly across the river from a town of Yuchi Indians, and many soldiers sought comfort and solace from the native women. Most of these

²Larry E. Ivers, *British Drums on the Southern Frontier: The Military Colonization of Georgia, 1733-1749* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of Chapel Hill Press, 1974), 7.

³Ivers, *Drums*, 7, 14, 16, 17, 195; Ivers, “The Soldiers of Fort Augusta,” in Edward J. Cashin, ed., *Colonial Augusta: “Key of the Indian Countrey”* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986), 86.

⁴For a short but useful description of daily life inside a colonial Georgian fort, see Ivers, “Soldiers,” in Cashin, *Colonial Augusta*, 86-88.

relations were short-lived and casual, though some rangers informally married Indian women and had children.⁵ Relations of a non-sexual nature could also be enjoyed by those rangers close enough to visit with all members of a native town. Since many of the forts doubled as trading depots, natives were frequently present. Salzburger minister Johann Boltzius lamented that the local Indians “harmonized fully” with the soldiers at Fort Augusta “in drinking, misbehaviour, and in the most dissolute things.”⁶ With most frontier posts having fewer than ten men and only one or two officers, the commanders were frequently as involved in the day-to-day operation on the frontier as were their subordinates. Tracing their military careers shows how prominent they were in influencing intercultural relations on Georgia’s frontier.

In 1733, South Carolina already had two manned outposts located on the Savannah River: Fort Moore was across the river from present Augusta, and to the southeast on the lower part of the river, Fort Prince George, also known as the Palachacola garrison, was within sixty miles of the new settlement of Savannah. (See Map 1.) A third fort, the Saltcatchers or Rangers fort, was located at the head of the Combahee River northeast of Palachacola.⁷ Upon the Georgia settlers’ arrival, the South Carolina assembly immediately sent to Savannah a provincial scout boat and one company of Southern Rangers under the direction of Capt. James MacPherson. The

⁵Ivers, *Drums*, 25, 199; *CRG*, 4:665-66, App.

⁶*DRS*, 5:64, March 20, 1738.

⁷Ivers, *Drums*, 15.

military detachment was “to Obey orders and directions as you shall receive from Mr. Oglethorpe, in order to Cover and protect that Settlement from any insults.”⁸

The company set up headquarters a few miles upriver from the new settlement and patrolled the immediate vicinity, keeping the Georgian settlers safe from attack while the town gained a footing. In June, General Oglethorpe had MacPherson and the rangers embark on a reconnaissance mission to establish the locales best suited for ranger forts to defend the exposed southwestern edge of the new colony. The group likely included several Indians, for although the rangers were familiar with the territory, Indians often accompanied them, providing valuable assistance both as guides and hunters. In fact, Oglethorpe claimed that “they generally carry the Indians on all Expeditions.”⁹

In surveying the land, the troop recognized the strategic importance of the spot where the Ogeechee River intersected with the trading path that led from Palachacola all the way to St. Augustine. (See Map 2.) Perhaps it was the native allies who pointed out that this was the path historically used by the Spanish-allied Yamassee Indians to invade South Carolina and now, potentially, Georgia as well. The site was thus selected for a defensive outpost, and MacPherson and his rangers were put to the task of construction.¹⁰

⁸Governor Johnson to Mr. Martyn, Feb. 12, 1733, EM, 14200:38; Resolution of South Carolina Council, EM, 14200:25; Ivers, *Drums*, 11.

⁹Ivers, *Drums*, 16-17, 39, 195.

¹⁰James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, Aug. 12, 1733, EM, 14200:107; Ivers, *Drums*, 17.

[Map pulled in accordance with copyright laws.]

Map 2. Savannah's Defenses, 1733-1736

Their first attempt went awry, and after the rangers abandoned this “First Fort” as it became known, they moved slightly downstream and successfully established Fort Argyle. Six families moved to the site to help cultivate the land, and the fortification was complete by the end of 1733.¹¹ In the spring of 1734, South Carolina increased the number of men stationed there to twenty, and First Fort would prove useful as well, as newly commissioned Lieutenant William Elbert took ten of the rangers to be stationed there.¹²

Altogether, there were thirty southern rangers working to defend Georgia in the earliest years – ten at Palachacola under Lieutenant Anaes McIntosh patrolling the east bank of the Savannah River; ten more under MacPherson at Fort Argyle keeping a watch over the west bank of the Ogeechee River, and the final ten under Elbert at First Fort, covering the ground in between the two rivers. These men comprised the bulk of the military presence for Georgia in the first three years of its existence. They were augmented by a series of fortified villages surrounding Savannah, such as Thunderbolt, Ebenezer, Abercorn, and Skidaway, and South Carolina’s scout boat that patrolled the intercostal waterway.¹³ The colony also had some help from Indian allies in scouting and raiding. In addition to the natives’ informal patrols, Oglethorpe successfully organized two companies of volunteer Indian militia. Headed by Yamacraws Skee and Tuskenca, the ranks were filled with “40 very clever men” who patrolled the Altamaha river. They

¹¹James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, Sept. 17, 1733, EM, 14200:113.

¹²Oglethorpe’s State of the Colony, March 1734, EM, 14200:516.

¹³Oglethorpe’s State of the Colony, March 1734, EM, 14200:513; Ivers, *Drums*, 29.

were each paid one bushel of corn a month, one gun upon enlistment, and one blanket each year, but were also allowed free provisions when visiting fortifications such as Fort Argyle. With a common interest in the defense of the territory plus the availability of free food and, most likely, rum, the Yamacraw volunteers certainly spent much time among the stationed rangers.¹⁴

At the end of 1735, Georgia's military structure was in place, but it was strictly defensive. It depended upon small, scattered patrols covering large territories to alert settlers of potential threats and fortified guardhouses in which the residents could seek refuge. Oglethorpe reported confidently in August 1733 that with the completion of fortifications at Thunderbolt and Skidaway, "all the Passages to this Town both by Land & Water are covered. . . .that by these forts. . .no small Bodys either of Spaniards or Indians can approach this place at all, nor any large one without a timely Discovery."¹⁵ Crucial to both the warning and defense components of the system were the native allies, including those comprising the Indian militia independently commanded, those joining with the rangers on their patrols or guard duty, and the native neighbors who could raise the alarm or help to provide a defense against hostile invaders. The system was designed to be an early warning system; there was no expectation that these forces alone could repel an invading force.

¹⁴Oglethorpe to the Trustees, June 9, 1733, EM, 14200:81-82; Oglethorpe's State of the Colony, March 1734, EM, 14200:517; Ivers, *Drums*, 21.

¹⁵Ivers, *Drums*, 28; Ivers, "Soldiers," in *Colonial Augusta*, 78; James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, Aug. 12, 1733, EM:14200:107-8.

The rangers and their native scouts were most useful “upon the passes of the river[s] and the roads to the Indian Countrey” where they could keep a watchful eye and if need be “give alarms of Indian enemies, intercept spies, &ca.”¹⁶ When one ranger heard that some Yamassee Indians were “skulking above at Fort Argyle on that river,” he determined to “see if we can come up with those strollers who come to spy and disturb our peace.” He felt an obligation to act immediately, for “as Ranger, I always think it my particular duty to be the first out on those occasions.”¹⁷ South Carolinians had long recognized the value of the ranger force, which was “always kept in Pay to discover the motions of the Indians.”¹⁸ But on the southernmost frontier, the French and Spanish were real threats as well, although fortunately in those early years, neither the Spanish nor the French really tested the system. Oglethorpe admitted, however, that without the rangers and Indian scouts, the new settlements would have no support on land, no means of long-distance communication, and “may at pleasure be surprised by the French [and Spanish] Indians.”¹⁹

When word reached Savannah in early 1735 that a body of Spanish Indians was heading towards Palachacola, it is almost certain that the rangers and Indian scouts had raised the alarm. They were definitely involved in the response to the threat. Capt. George Dunbar led an extensive reconnaissance mission covering the entire area

¹⁶Quoted in Ivers, *Drums*, 193.

¹⁷Noble Jones to James Oglethorpe, July 3-6, 1735, in *OG*, 1:209.

¹⁸Governor Johnson to Mr. Martyn, Feb. 12, 1733, EM, 14200:37.

¹⁹James Oglethorpe to Lord Egmont, Feb. 21, 1736, in *OG*, 1:237.

accessible by water from Savannah to the disputed borderland with Florida. He had with him four Indian volunteers and eleven whites, including two officers, an interpreter, and eight rangers. In the eleven-day journey, the group searched for signs of any suspicious people or activity and patrolled the areas surrounding the small fortifications of Thunderbolt and Skidaway, the coastal islands of Sapelo, St. Catherine's, St. Simon's, and Jekyll, checked on the southernmost outpost of Fort King George, and traveled back. All seemed right in the British territory, for "tho we hunted carefully," the scout group did not find "any people that cou'd not give satisfying cause for there being there." As part of the scouting mission, the Indians "behaved with utmost discretion and forwardness" and provided additional labor by hunting. The group also encountered other friendly Indians who informed them that they had not noticed anything suspicious in the area.²⁰ Collectively, the rangers, accompanying Indians, and friendly natives stood guard over the fledgling colony. When rumors of marauding Yamassees surfaced later that year, the Savannah magistrates put the frontier settlements on alert, notified Capt. MacPherson of the Rangers, and "procured some Indians to Cruise towards the Altamahaw."²¹ Called upon one more time in November, the Indians "made several scouts without any discovery," reassuring the Georgians that they were safe.²² Whether or not the patrols discovered any enemies, the collective efforts of the Indians and the rangers were clearly a crucial part of Georgia's early defense system.

²⁰*CRG*, 20:192, Jan. 23, 1735; Capt. Dunbar to James Oglethorpe, Jan. 23, 1735, in *OG*, 1:111-12.

²¹Thomas Causton to Patrick Mackay, April 10, 1735, *CRG*, 20:317.

²²*CRG*, 21:58, Nov. 20, 1735.

In addition to securing an effective defensive screen immediately surrounding Savannah, Oglethorpe hoped to expand the frontier defenses, shore up native alliances, and clean up problems stemming from the Indian trade. To these ends, he sent a military envoy among the Creeks in 1734. He commissioned Capt. Patrick Mackay to lead the military expedition in March, though for a variety of delays including problems of supply, illness, and bad weather, Mackay's group did not get underway until November.²³

One of Mackay's primary goals was to obtain permission from the Upper Creeks for the Georgians to build a fort in their towns to counter the French presence at Fort Toulouse. South Carolina had frequently tried to do the same, but with Oglethorpe's superior Indian relations and recent alliances, perhaps the Georgians would have better luck. If they were successful, the South Carolina Assembly agreed to fund the garrison for the first two years if Oglethorpe recruited and directed the soldiers.²⁴

Mackay's expedition had a number of interesting people to assist him in his goals. Included in his entourage were five officers, sixteen rangers with enlistments of one full year, a surgeon, an interpreter, a messenger, a guide, and two or three packhorsemen. He probably hired two Indian guides as well. The chief packhorseman was Indian trader

²³Patrick Mackay to James Oglethorpe, Nov. 20, 1734, EM, 14200:307-308; Patrick Mackay to the Trustees, Aug. 10, 1734, *CRG*, 20:69; Jenys and Baker to James Oglethorpe, Sept. 6, 1734, *CRG*, 20:79; Patrick Mackay to James Oglethorpe, Nov. 20, 1734, in *OG*, 1:61. Mary Musgrove worried in July that "the Indians had expected him these three months ago" but that he had "not gone up as yet to the Creeks nor I do not know when he will." See Mary Musgrove to James Oglethorpe, July 17, 1734, *CRG*, 20:63.

²⁴David H. Corkran, *The Creek Frontier, 1540-1783* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 93-94; Ivers, *Drums*, 32-33.

John Gray, and another Indian trader named Thomas Wiggins was directed by Oglethorpe to be their guide.²⁵

Arriving in Coweta, the principal town of the Lower Creeks, in mid-December, Mackay established his headquarters. Over the course of the next three and a half months, he met with various Lower Creek headmen. At the end of March 1735, the expedition moved on to Okfuskee, a principal town among the Upper Creeks, and the place where the Georgians hoped to establish a fort. Initially, the expedition met with some success. Mackay carried favor with the Indians through the affable and talented Dr. Hirsch, who impressed many of the Indians with his healing powers. The presence of John Gray and Thomas Wiggins, two well-known and respected traders among the Creeks, probably boosted the expedition's credentials as well. In addition, the timing was right, for the Creeks had recently had some trouble with the French soldiers at Fort Toulouse and were consequently willing to entertain British overtures. They were not convinced, however, that they should allow the British to build a fort in their territory, even after Mackay threatened to ban the trade if they would not comply. Finally, after a week's debate, the Creeks gave their permission.²⁶

²⁵Ivers, *Drums*, 35, 38-39; Patrick Mackay to James Oglethorpe, Nov. 20, 1734, *CRG*, 20:112. Both of these men offered invaluable advice during the expedition, not only on the Indians but also on the geography, the necessary supplies, and the best route for obtaining them. *CRG*, 20:78, 79, 112.

²⁶Ivers, *Drums*, 41, 45; Patrick Mackay to the Trustees, March 28, 1735, in *OG*, 1:147; John Fenwicke to James Oglethorpe, April 3, 1735, *CRG*, 20:310-11; Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 94.

With the Okfuskee fort, the British obtained a counter to the French, secured the westernmost British garrison in North America, and signified an important if meager military presence among the Creeks. Anthony Willey, a lieutenant formerly at Fort Moore, South Carolina, was left in charge of a small party of rangers to represent the British at Fort Okfuskee once Mackay and the others had left the Indian nation.²⁷

Having a military presence among the Creeks was useful to the Georgians for a variety of reasons, probably the least of which were military. The Okfuskee fort never had more than a handful of men stationed there – sometimes only two in addition to Willey, and never more than eight or ten. Given the size of the Creek nation and the much stronger presence of the French just forty miles away at Fort Toulouse, the only true military characteristic the Okfuskee fort could have provided was some meager protection. Even that would not be sustainable in so remote of a location should relations sour. But Willey and the Okfuskee fort are a good example of the ways in which the military was a useful influence in intercultural relations – not through warfare, but rather, like the traders, as an additional source of information, diplomacy, and compromise brokering when conflicts arose.

Before being stationed at Okfuskee, Willey already had a salutary history of interacting with the natives in the Southeast. In addition to his military career in South Carolina, he was a licensed trader in that colony by 1730, and probably earlier. Willey was typical of many military personnel functioning in Georgia; a majority of the captains

²⁷Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Dec. 14, 1736, *CRG*, 21:289, Ivers, *Drums*, 47.

had a background in trading among the Indians.²⁸ This experience made them all the more capable of successfully brokering cultural exchange on the frontier.

From his post in Okfuskee, Willey immediately began conveying important information from the Creek nation back to the magistrates at Savannah. His “advices” reached town consistently whenever any traders traveled the route, and when information was urgent, he would send “an express” to town immediately.²⁹ Secretary William Stephens recognized the importance of the military presence, knowing that the garrison could “observe the Indians” and “give Intelligence, &c.”³⁰ This advantage applied not only to the Creeks but to the activities of the nearby French and their native allies the Choctaws. In February 1738, Willey reported that the Choctaws had attacked the British-allied Chickasaws. He offered a full report, including the number of casualties, the specifics of the attack, and the Chickasaws’ response.³¹ A year later, he alerted the Savannah magistrates that the Choctaws had attacked British traders among the Chickasaws. He not only relayed the story, but also explained the repercussions in the Indian territory: as allies of both the Chickasaws and the British, the Creeks would “take Revenge on those whom they found for the damage done to their friends.” His professional opinion was that “upon the whole it is looked on as certain, that the Creek

²⁸Thomas Draine and John Skinner, comps., *South Carolina Soldiers and Traders, 1725-30* (Columbia, SC: Congaree Publications, 1986).

²⁹Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Dec. 14, 1736, *CRG*, 21:289; *CRG*, 4:82, Feb. 16, 1738.

³⁰*CRG*, 4:241, Dec. 6, 1738.

³¹*CRG*, 4:82, Feb. 16, 1738.

and Choctaws must come to an open War.”³² When rumors surfaced in late 1738 that the Creeks themselves were planning to “cut off all the White People who lived among them,” the importance of the Okfuskee garrison became evident. The fort would have been available as a place of refuge should the uprising have occurred. Before panic took over, however, Willey was able to intercede. He was in the position to check on the veracity of the reports, connecting with Creek headmen who could determine that they were merely rumors instigated by the French. Before the problem had a chance to escalate, Willey had put the fears to rest and successfully maintained relations between the Creeks and their traders.³³

When problems did arise between the two cultures, the garrison could serve to address the problem and to enforce an equitable solution, ensuring the continued good standing of the British-native alliance. In one such example, a Creek headman named the Dog King complained to Thomas Causton that Alexander Wood had “frequently killed his cattle.” Worse than that, the Dog King had attempted to speak civilly with Wood about the matter to inquire into the circumstances, but Wood “slighted him & treated him very ill.” Eager to address the problem, Causton commanded Wood to make restitution to the headman “for all the Injuries you have Done him.” To ensure that the order was carried out and that amicable relations were restored, Causton advised Willey of the situation and cautioned Wood that the lieutenant was “to see that things are Done” and give a full report back to the magistrates. Causton understood that the “Peace & welfare

³²*CRG*, 4:326, March 29, 1739.

³³*CRG*, 4:241, Dec. 6, 1738; *CRG*, 5:138, March 16, 1739.

of this Province” could only be secured by fair treatment and was content to leave the assurance of the “Execution of justice” in the capable hands of the military personnel. The cattle situation in 1737 created tension between the trader and the chief, but Willey apparently rectified the situation to the Dog King’s satisfaction, and harmony was restored. A month later, the Creek mico, then at Frederica, asked the trader for his help to “send to him [the Dog King] his friends from the nation” so that they could aid in the defense of Georgia.³⁴

With the establishment of the fort and garrison at Okfuskee, one of Mackay’s main directives had been accomplished. But while he stayed in the Upper Creek nation for only about six weeks, he caused trouble there by pushing his secondary agenda: the reorganization of the Indian trade. Georgia magistrates hoped to control the trade by being the exclusive colony to issue licenses to Indian traders, and part of Mackay’s command was to oust any of those who had not secured a license from Georgia, including those who had previously been licensed by South Carolina. In choosing those who would receive a Georgia license and thus remain in Indian country, Mackay seemed to favor some over others, and certainly from the Indians’ perspective, his choices seemed random. Eleven traders, including Thomas Wiggins, were favored by becoming members of a trading company that had exclusive rights to the Creek trade, while eight other traders were expelled from the Creek nation, many of whom had long-standing ties with their native clients. Although Mackay’s efforts were an attempt to better regulate

³⁴Thomas Causton to Alex Wood, Jan 12, 1737, *CRG*, 21:303; Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Jan 16, 1737, *CRG*, 21:304; Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Feb. 24, 1737, *CRG*, 21:314.

the trade in a fair manner, at least from Georgia's perspective, from the Indians' viewpoint, they were neither fair nor an improvement.³⁵

Mackay may have been heavy-handed in his treatment of the traders, but he was in a difficult position. Caught in the middle of two colonies feuding over the control of the extremely profitable Indian trade, he was bound to offend someone if he executed his orders. Ultimately, his tactics caused such an uproar in South Carolina that the Georgia Trustees were forced to discharge him "out of our service" in October 1735. They had questions about a few of his other practices as well, most noticeably inciting a Creek headman to raid the Spanish during official peace times and taking it upon himself to determine which Creek chiefs were worthy of receiving a larger share of the Trustees' presents while dismissing Tomochichi's suggestions. Mackay adhered to both of these practices in the hopes of carrying out the Trustees' overall agenda, but the political fallout was too much, and after 1735, Mackay retired from the Georgia military scene.³⁶

But Georgia officials remained determined to control the Indian trade. The 1733 "Act for Maintaining the Peace with the Indians in Georgia" had outlined new trade regulations, including the licensing policy, that the Georgia magistrates hoped to enforce. In February 1736, the Trustees employed Lieutenant Willey, the highest-ranking military representative residing in the Creek nation, to deliver copies of the act, newly approved

³⁵Trader Depositions, July 1735, *JCHA*, 1736-39:113-121; Patrick Mackay to Mr. Jones, May 28, 1735, *CRG*, 21:10-11; Thomas Broughton to the President of the Board of Trustees, Oct., 1735, *CRG*, 21:3-4; For the irritated reaction of one Creek Indian, see *EJ*, 176-77, July 10, 1736.

³⁶*EJ*, 114, Oct. 10, 1735; *CRG*, 29:110, Oct. 10, 1735; *CRG*, 29:111, November 1, 1736.

by the king, to the Creeks and their traders. Ideally, he was to inform the traders of its contents, explain it to the Indians, and enforce the regulations. All traders in the Indian country had to hold a license from Georgia, and they were required, if they did not already have one, to journey to Savannah by June to rectify the situation. This had the potential for the military to disrupt Indian relations again, but Willey, one of a very small number of rangers in the lone and very small Okfuskee fort, did not pose much of a threat nor did he succeed in obtaining much compliance.³⁷

When it became evident that most traders were disregarding the Trustees' orders, Oglethorpe commissioned Roger Lacy, a ranger captain, and John Tanner, Jr., a young orphaned favorite of Oglethorpe, as Indian agents. They were instructed to go to the Indian nations, Lacy among the Cherokees, Tanner among the Creeks, and to seize the goods and property of any unlicensed traders.³⁸

Capt. Lacy, supported by ten rangers and ten licensed traders serving as "constables," traveled to the Cherokees in July. The group moved from town to town, shutting down the operations of the South Carolina traders. Some resisted, some quietly sold their goods and left the nation, but almost all went immediately to Charles Town to complain to the governor. Many of the Indians offered support to the traders, some going

³⁷An Act for Maintaining the Peace with the Indians in the Province of Georgia, January 21, 1733, *CRG*, 1:31-44; Mr. Oglethorpe's Summons to the Indian Traders, *JCHA* 1736-39:132.

³⁸Oglethorpe's Instructions to Roger Lacy, June 11, 1736, EM, 14202: 1-2; *EJ*, 167, June 1736.

so far as to threaten to kill the Georgians if they molested the South Carolina traders.³⁹ Meanwhile, Tanner, supported by Willey and the Okfuskee rangers, was faring no better. Being young and inexperienced and trifling with the livelihood and client relations of leading traders who had spent years among the Indians, Tanner had difficulty commanding respect. Creek supporters of the ousted traders mocked him as “a child,” and the headmen of the Echataws town “called a Council of War,” vowing to reclaim the confiscated goods, return them to their trader’s store, and “send him the said Tanner away.”⁴⁰

The presence of Oglethorpe’s military agents seeking to enforce the trading regulations in the Indian country put the natives in “the utmost confusion.” Fortunately, the two colonies had meanwhile worked out a temporary compromise that allowed for joint regulation of trade. In August 1736, Oglethorpe sent orders to the two agents “not to disturb or molest any Traders that are there and took lycenses out of this province [of South Carolina].” Capt. Lacy and his troops withdrew in September, and Lieutenant Willey and his eight rangers escorted Tanner back to Savannah in late October. A permanent agreement would not be reached until 1741, when each colony was given the right to license half of all the traders within the Indian nations. But at least relations

³⁹*EJ*, 201, Sept. 18, 1736; John Gardiner’s Journal or Narrative on Oath, Sept. 30, 1736, *JCHA* 1736-39:135.

⁴⁰Thomas John’s Journal or Narrative on Oath, Dec. 6, 1736, *JCHA* 1736-39:140.

between the two colonies greatly improved after 1736, and therefore Georgia's military was not called on again to perform actions that would disrupt native-trader relations.⁴¹

* * * * *

With a fort established in the Creek nation and the trade dispute with South Carolina tempered, Georgia looked to its military to expand its boundaries and to increase its defense. Throughout the second half of the 1730s, friction with Spain was mounting, and war was expected to be declared at any moment. Oglethorpe reorganized the rangers into five new companies, totaling about fifty men, in addition to Capt. MacPherson's troops then patrolling the southeastern border towns. Capt. Aneas Macintosh's company stayed at Palachicola. Patrick Mackay had been discharged, but his company was retained and divided into two: Lieutenant Willey and his men remained at Okfuskee and another detachment under Ensign Hugh Mackay, Jr. – nephew to Patrick – was redirected to the territory around the Altamaha River. Lieutenant John Cuthbert was to command another group that protected Savannah's northern frontier.⁴² The fifth group of rangers was to be headed by Capt. Roger Lacy; their main assignment was to establish Fort Augusta, but they were temporarily reassigned to the mission to the Cherokees. In addition, plans were made for two more defensive establishments – Darien and Frederica – southeast of Savannah.

⁴¹Thomas John's Journal or Narrative on Oath, Dec. 6, 1736, *JCHA* 1736-39:140; Sam Eveleigh to Harman Verelst, Aug. 9, 1736, *CRG*, 21:206-07; Ivers, *Drums*, 68-70; Sam Eveleigh to Harman Verelst, Oct. 13, 1736, *CRG*, 21:212; Julie Anne Sweet, *Negotiating for Georgia* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2005), 104-05.

⁴²*EJ*, 185, July 1736; Ivers, *Drums*, 51-52.

Crucial to the foundation and protection of these new establishments was Georgia's military personnel, especially two relatives of the Scottish Mackay family. Hugh Mackay Sr. was a lieutenant, then captain, in the king's army, and his nephew, Hugh Jr., was in charge of one of the ranger companies. Like most important military personnel during the early years of Georgia, both Hugh Sr. and Jr. had extensive interaction with the natives, and following their stories on the early Georgia frontier allows us to trace the military's involvement in intercultural relations in those early years.

In January 1736, a group of Scottish Highlander recruits settled a new town named Darien on the Altamaha River near the old site of Fort King George. (See Map 3.) This group of nearly two hundred was family-based, but the majority of the men were soldiers and had been carefully hand-picked for their military abilities. The Trustees were looking for hardy settlers who could serve both as planters and soldiers, and the Scottish clansmen seemed perfect choices.⁴³ The families had been recruited by Capt. Hugh Mackay Sr., a brother of Patrick and uncle of Hugh Jr., and Capt. George Dunbar, both whom would have a strong influence on the early military affairs in Georgia. Arriving to help the new settlement was MacPherson and his company of rangers, relocated to patrol the area between Savannah and Darien. Also aiding the new settlement was a group of six Yamacraw Indians sent by Tomochichi to "shew them the

⁴³Anthony W. Parker, *Scottish Highlanders in Georgia: The Recruitment, Immigration, and Settlement at Darien, 1735-1748* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 1; "An Account Showing the Progress of the Colony of Georgia," *CRG*, 3:373.

[Map pulled in accordance with copyright laws.]

Map 3. Georgia, 1740-1742

country and to Hunt for them.” The Trustees’ storekeeper, Thomas Causton, gave Hugh Sr. a hogshead of beer “to refresh the Indians” who aided the Highlanders.⁴⁴ By March, Hugh Jr.’s rangers had arrived at their new post in the region and were providing protection for workers clearing a road between Darien and Savannah. The Yamacraws served as guides in determining the best path for the road and hunted for the workers as well.⁴⁵ Within a few months, Darien was well-established, and the Trustees had their fortified, military town as an addition to their frontier defense.

Frederica, the major military town in early Georgia, was founded in 1736 as well. Frederica’s settlers were recruited in London and arrived in Georgia with Oglethorpe in February. While the settlers rested in Savannah, Oglethorpe took a small crew, including a party of Indians, to scope out the town’s site. Upon arriving at St. Simon’s Island, the Indians were the first off the boat, on the lookout for any signs of Spanish presence in the area. Under their protection, Oglethorpe and his men mapped out Fort Frederica and built a few temporary huts. The settlers arrived in early March and began building huts, working on the fort, and clearing fields.⁴⁶ Mackay’s rangers offered some help here as well, in between surveying the road and aiding the Scots at Darien.⁴⁷

⁴⁴Parker, *Highlanders*, 55; Francis Moore, “Journal,” in Trevor R. Reese, *Our First Visit in America: Early Reports from the Colony of Georgia, 1732-1740* (Savannah, GA: Beehive Press, 1974), 104-05, 112; Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Jan. 20, 1735, *CRG*, 21:72.

⁴⁵Moore, “Journal,” in *First Visit*, 118; Charles C. Jones, Jr., *The Dead Towns of Georgia* (Savannah, GA: Morning News Steam Printing House, 1878), 55.

⁴⁶Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 96; Ivers, *Drums*, 55.

⁴⁷James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, March 16, 1736, *CRG*, 21:104.

Oglethorpe praised both the Highlanders and the Indian allies, saying that they “have behaved with great Courage, fidelity, and affection” in the efforts to establish the southern frontier fortifications. That praise was extended as well to Major William Horton, Oglethorpe’s second-in-command at Frederica and the commander of the town’s militia, who had arrived that year as part of the recruitment to defend the southern frontier.⁴⁸ From the headquarters at Frederica, Horton could keep a close eye on the Spanish, frequently reporting their movements and their disposition towards the English. He also often consulted with the headmen of the Indian allies and with Mary Musgrove, working with each of them to ascertain the best strategic moves in defense of the colony.⁴⁹ Like most important military personnel during the early years of Georgia, the careers of Horton and both Mackays required frequent interaction with the natives.

Hoping to complete a strong line of defense on the colony’s southern flank, Oglethorpe made another reconnaissance mission farther south after Frederica was established. The Mackays, Horton, the rangers, and the Indians were all part of this mission as well. Tomochichi told the Lower Creek headmen to send a “substantial force” to guard the new townsite while the Yamacraws joined Oglethorpe and the rangers on the expedition. Oglethorpe ordered Capt. Hugh Mackay Sr. to build another fortification, Fort Saint Andrews, on Cumberland Island. When construction began in April 1736, Hugh Jr.’s rangers were there to help again, as was “a large party” of Yamacraws.

⁴⁸Letter of James Oglethorpe, March 28, 1736, *CRG*, 21:124.

⁴⁹For consultation with Indian headmen, see *CRG*, 4:325; 22:81, 217, 233-34, 236, and *OG*, 1:344; for working with Mary Musgrove, see *CRG*, 4:327, 328, May 1, 2, 1739.

Darien's Highlanders supplied the soldiers for both it and Fort Saint George, the southernmost British fortification located on the St. John's River, established a month later. Major Horton met with the Spaniards at that time in an attempt to establish the boundaries between the two colonies and oversaw the construction of the fort. Once completed, Hugh Mackay Jr. commanded his rangers at Fort Saint Andrews, patrolling the Altamaha, while Hugh Sr. presided over the Highlanders at Fort Saint George. When the latter fort was abandoned after a good-faith agreement with Spain in October 1736, the Scots built and garrisoned Amelia Fort on Amelia Island.⁵⁰

By the end of 1736, a series of forts and fortified towns extended all along the colony's southern edge, from Savannah, past the contested English-Spanish boundary line, and even into official Spanish territory on the Saint John's River. Savannah's western and immediate northern frontiers were also well protected by forts and towns such as Fort Argyle and Ebenezer. That left the northwestern end of the Savannah River, from which paths led to both the Cherokees and the Creek nations. Capt. Lacy and his rangers were directed in 1736 to establish Fort Augusta there but were not free to do so until 1737. Lacy and fourteen rangers began the work in May; Lacy's second-in-command, Lieutenant Richard Kent, and six laborers joined the group in July. The closest Indian neighbors, a dislocated band of Chickasaws, "reciev'd them very kindly, &

⁵⁰Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 97; *EJ*, 147, April 7, 1736; An Anonymous Letter, April 12, 1736, in *OG* 1:260; Jones, *Dead Towns*, 59; Parker, *Highlanders*, 58, 59; Charles Wesley, *Journal of Charles Wesley, M.A., sometime student of Christ Church, Oxford* (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book-Room, [1849]), microform, May 9, 1736; April 11, 1736 and May 9, 1736; Sam Eveleigh to Harman Verelst, May 22, 1736, *CRG*, 21:150; James Oglethorpe to the Trustees' Accountant, May 6, 1741, *CRG*, 23:30; Ivers, *Drums*, 58, 62, 78.

promis'd them their assistance." The establishment of a fortified trading town in that location would have multiple benefits. It would strengthen the native alliances and divert much of the trade from the South Carolinians at Savannah Town, five miles down river. It would also provide refuge and defense for Georgians in the area and serve as a lifeline for the garrison stationed at the Okfuskee fort.⁵¹

For a variety of reasons, the fort was not completed until April 1738. It did not take long, however, for Augusta to thrive. The town was almost immediately settled by a large number of traders and, given its preeminent location, prospered from the Indian trade. By September 1739, there was "a pretty little town there, protected by a Fort." The settlers were chiefly traders and their families, who established in town "large Warehouses of goods, and a great trade drove with the Indian nation."⁵²

The Trustees also charged Lacy with "cultivating a friendship with neighboring Indians" and apparently were pleased with his tactics and success. There seemed to be no lasting ill-effects from his earlier mission to discharge the South Carolina traders, and he traveled into the Cherokee nation again upon settling Augusta to explain the Trustees' goals and designs to the Indians. Thomas Causton proclaimed Lacy's success, happily noting that "the Indians on that quarter [are] in perfect friendship."⁵³ Lieutenant Kent

⁵¹*EJ*, 183, July 20, 1736; Ivers, "Soldiers," in Cashin, *Colonial Augusta*, 78; Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Dec. 14, 1736, *CRG*, 21:289; *JJW*, 401, Dec. 2, 1737; Journal of Thomas Causton, June 19, 1737, *EM*, 14203:34; Ivers, *Drums*, 75-77.

⁵²*CRG*, 4:133, April 24, 1738; *EJ*, 168, June 9, 1736.

⁵³Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Jan. 4, 1739, *CRG*, vol. 22, pt. 2:27.

had a good reputation as well – “everybody who came from this parts” reported Kent to be “a diligent officer who maintained good order and Authority.”⁵⁴

Like other military personnel, Lacy and Kent frequently provided intelligence regarding the Indian nations in their vicinity. They transmitted accounts of the meetings they had with the Indians, alerted the magistrates when there was a change in the Indians’ disposition towards the British, and frequently provided “a good Account of the Situation of Affairs.” When the French spread rumors among the Indians about the British, or when the Cherokees or the Creeks gave the British “some reasons to doubt [them] not to be so much our Friends as we took them to be,” the Augusta garrison immediately alerted the magistrates.⁵⁵ The military men also set about immediately to rectify the situation, whether conducting talks to reassure the Indians or actually addressing and solving the problem. In one instance, the Cherokees arrived at the fort very distressed that the English hoped to “cast them off.” But after having a talk with Lieutenant Kent, who reassured them that “the English meant them nothing but good, and should be ready to supply them with whatever they wanted in trade,” the Indians were “fully satisfied” and returned to their homes “in perfect good Humour.” In another instance, when an unlicensed person was “stirring up mischief of dangerous consequence among those [Indian] nations” by undermining Tomochichi’s authority, Lacy captured the wanted man and sent him to Savannah to stand trial. He broke out of jail the following month,

⁵⁴*CRG*, 4:133, April 24, 1738.

⁵⁵*CRG*, 4:133, 312, 362, 387, April 24, 1738, April 7, 1739, July 23, 1739, August 11, 1739.

however, and the second time around it was Kent who captured the fugitive on the frontier, thus helping to restore peaceful relations.⁵⁶

Lacy and Kent were so successful among the Indians that a band of Chickasaws decided to settle a town near the fort. The group had been situated near New Windsor in South Carolina, but as “they preferred rather to have a friendly commerce with us,” they chose to relocate. They professed to Lacy that they would be “ready in assisting us on any occasion,” and the Chickasaws, under their mico the Squirrel King, honored that promise. When trouble with the Spanish flared up in the spring of 1737, the remnant Chickasaws rallied behind the Georgians and took to the frontier to defend the colony. A combined group of whites, Chickasaws, Yuchis, and other Indians, led by trader-turned-captain William Gray, were to go to Savannah “to be in readiness to assist that colony if attacked by the enemy.” Gray had been involved with leading this remnant band of military allies for nearly a year, as the group had dined together at Thomas Causton’s house with John Wesley in April 1736.⁵⁷ Although no attack materialized in the spring of 1737, the combined group of Chickasaws and Yuchis under Squirrel King and Capt. Gray would be very welcome allies in the upcoming war with Spain.

During that same alarm which drew out the remnant Indian group to defend the colony, another small group went into service as well. A party of rangers was formed in 1737, stationed near Savannah, and led by Thomas Jones. This ranger captain had a

⁵⁶*CRG*, 4:166, July 4, 1738, 362, June 26, 1739.

⁵⁷*CRG*, 4:47, Dec. 9, 1737; Council Minutes, March 15, 1737, *JCHA* 1736-39:370, Albert C. Outler, ed., *Works of John Wesley*, 26 vols. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1984-1993), 18:496d, April 8, 1736.

varied background: he was the offspring of a union between an Indian trader and a Creek woman. He was himself a trader among the Creeks, beginning in at least 1723 and probably earlier. He considered himself a South Carolinian but also owned a town lot in Savannah.⁵⁸ He was very close with Mary Musgrove and had recently made an expedition to attempt to open the trade with the Choctaws.⁵⁹ Given his background and connections, Capt. Jones was highly respected by the Indians and could provide useful information both about them and the French. For instance, in October 1734 he reported that the French were reinforcing Fort Toulouse with an additional eighty to one hundred men. The Indians had a “very great respect and Value for Mr. Jones,” qualities that would make this ranger captain very important when relations with Spain degenerated into war.⁶⁰

With the defenses in place on the perimeter around Savannah, the only thing missing was a regiment of redcoat soldiers – the three hundred or so militiamen that Georgia could raise, coupled with the fifty or so rangers, would certainly not be adequate in time of war. Oglethorpe left for England in November 1736 to drum up support for a regiment of regulars to be stationed in Georgia. Knowing that the Spanish were preparing for war, the king agreed. Oglethorpe began recruiting in September 1737 to fill

⁵⁸Mary Musgrove to James Oglethorpe, July 17, 1734, in *OG*, 1:45; Thomas Causton to James Oglethorpe, July 7, 1735, in *OG*, 1:95; Ivers, *Drums*, 75.

⁵⁹Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Jan. 16, 1735, *CRG*, 20:171; Mary Musgrove to James Oglethorpe, July 17, 1734, in *OG*, 1:44-45; Isaac Chardon to James Oglethorpe, Aug. 1, 1734, *CRG*, 20:64.

⁶⁰Samuel Eveleigh to James Oglethorpe, Oct. 19, 1734, in *OG*, 1:59; Mary Musgrove to James Oglethorpe, July 17, 1734, *CRG*, 20:64.

the authorized 684 slots for the Forty-second Regiment of Foot. The regiment was composed of six companies. Officers were mostly recruited from England, but Hugh Mackay Sr. received the command of one company. Lesser positions also went to Hugh Jr. and John Tanner. The troops had all arrived by September 1738 and took up their positions at Frederica and Saint Andrews and began construction on Fort Saint Simons on the south end of the same island.⁶¹

With the arrival of the regulars, the Trustees believed that Georgia was soundly protected and thus refused to pay any more for rangers or fortifications. Georgia's provincial troops consequently faced a temporary reduction. Oglethorpe was forced to disband some of the ranger companies – those under the leadership of Hugh Mackay Jr., MacPherson, and Macintosh ended between October and December 1738. Mackay was reassigned into the regiment and kept a watch over Amelia Fort with the Highlanders. Two of MacPherson's rangers were retained at Fort Argyle, as were Cuthbert's rangers at Joseph's Town and Lieutenant Kent and the Augusta rangers, though the latter's numbers were reduced to ten. Kent had taken over the command of Augusta and the rangers stationed there after Roger Lacy died in August 1738. Thomas Jones' small party was disbanded in June 1739. In the Indian nations, Willey and one soldier remained at Okfuskee, and one officer and one soldier were stationed among the Cherokees.

⁶¹*EJ*, 243, March 14, 1737, 371, June 6, 1738; *CRG*, 4:157, June 16, 197, Sept. 8, 1738; Ivers, *Drums*, 78-82; James M. Johnson, *Militiamen, Rangers, and Redcoats: The Military in Georgia, 1754-1776* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1992), 13.

Oglethorpe believed in the value and necessity of these additional forces so much that he was willing to pay for those retained out of his own pocket.⁶²

While the colony waited for the regulars to arrive, and even after they took up their positions, the magistrates constantly emphasized the importance of the rangers and Indian allies. South Carolina had stopped paying for the rangers in 1737, and Oglethorpe argued that “it was impossible for one regiment of foot to cover such a vast frontier.” He maintained that “in order to keep them in readiness against the Spanish invasion,” the Trustees’ officers were obliged to continue to employ the rangers and to supply the Indians with “arms, ammunition, and necessaries.” As war with Spain crept closer, Oglethorpe was “forced to put 30 rangers upon footing” and asked the Indian traders to recruit native allies “to preserve the Province in this critical juncture.” The following week, Oglethorpe sent a letter to the Trustees begging them to find a way to pay for a troops of rangers and officers to head the Indians, “without which we shall lie entirely open to the insults of the Spanish horse and Indians upon the continent.”⁶³

The Georgians understood the importance of the rangers, not just for defense but in other areas as well. They were a strong connection to the Indians, providing information and contact. It was Capt. MacIntosh, for example, who located an Indian

⁶²Ivers, *Drums*, 77, 85-86; Ivers, “Soldiers” in *Colonial Augusta*, 79; *CRG*, 5:66, Aug. 26, 1738; Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Feb. 19, 1741, in *OG*, 2:557; James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, Oct. 20, 1739, *CRG*, vol. 22, pt. 2: 252-53.

⁶³Ivers, *Drums*, 71; James Oglethorpe to George Heathcote, Nov. 20, 1738, in *OG*, 2:365; James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, Oct. 5, 1739, *CRG*, vol. 22, pt. 2:218; James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, Oct. 29, 1739, in *OG*, 2:419.

guide named Jack for an expedition conducted by the colony's secretary in 1736.⁶⁴ The rangers were also involved with the recruitment of Indian forces and usually were the ones aware of their whereabouts. Mackay alerted Stephens in early 1735 that seven Creek Indians had gone to patrol the southern frontier. In late 1739, Oglethorpe sent Captains MacIntosh and Dunbar to the Chickasaw town near Augusta to recruit warriors to help defend the colony. They subsequently relayed the good news that the Indians would send allies and also conveyed the vital information of their strength and numbers and when Oglethorpe could expect them.⁶⁵ Clearly, communication was key, and rangers could also be employed to deliver vital information. Oglethorpe praised them for their ability to "carry advices through these vast Forests and swim Rivers." When Mackay was hoping in March 1735 that Stephens could send word to him in the Creek Nation if war was officially declared with France, he knew that an express could "easily be supplied by Capt. MacPherson if any be requisite."⁶⁶ In addition to their ability to help in the defense of the colony against foreign enemies, the rangers were also crucial in defending against domestic ones. Georgia faced threats from "Felons, Runaway servants, outlaws and Slaves from Carolina" as well. Oglethorpe observed that the reduction in the ranger forces meant that the presence of these people had "grown so common" that large

⁶⁴E. Merton Coulter, ed. *Journal of William Stephens* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1958-1959), 2 vols., 1:239, June 9, 1736.

⁶⁵Joseph Fitzwalter to James Oglethorpe, April 2, 1735, *CRG*, 20:306; *CRG* 4:456, Nov. 20, 1739.

⁶⁶Quoted in Larry E. Ivers, "Rangers, Scouts, and Tythingmen" in Harvey H. Jackson and Phiniza Spalding, eds., *Forty Years of Diversity: Essays on Colonial Georgia* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1984), 158; Letter from Patrick Mackay, March 27, 1735, in *OG*, 1:145.

numbers of the colony's livestock were being killed and stolen. The miscreants greatly bothered settlers on the frontier "for want of Rangers to pursue them."⁶⁷

The ranger and Indian forces were especially crucial when the famous slave uprising, the Stono Rebellion, occurred in South Carolina in 1739. Everyone knew that the slaves were heading for St. Augustine, where the Spanish would grant them freedom. They would have to go through Georgia, of course, but "the rangers being newly reduced, " the Georgians could not stop them. Oglethorpe immediately "ordered out the Indians in pursuit" and used this crisis as the final piece of evidence to reinstate the full body of rangers. He ordered John Cuthbert to raise a company immediately and stationed a garrison at the Palachacola fort again under Capt. MacIntosh. He hoped the Trustees, if unwilling to pay for them, would apply to Parliament, for without them Oglethorpe predicted that the colony "would be entirely destroyed." In November, the Georgians were authorized to raise another ranger unit, which totaled about a dozen men and was led by Hugh Mackay Jr.⁶⁸

With war on the horizon, Georgia had in place the best defense the colony could muster. Before open warfare began, however, Oglethorpe hoped to persuade the Creeks to join with him against the Spanish. To that end, he organized an expedition to Coweta in August 1739. Most of Georgia's important military personnel were involved in the month-long diplomatic mission. Oglethorpe was accompanied by several of the ranger

⁶⁷James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, July 4, 1739, *CRG*, vol. 22, pt. 2:169.

⁶⁸James Oglethorpe to Harman Verelst, Oct. 9, 1739, *CRG*, vol. 22, pt. 2:232, 235, 236; *CRG*, 5:242, Oct. 20, 1739; James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, Oct. 20, 1739, *CRG*, vol. 22, pt. 2:252; Ivers, *Drums*, 91.

captains, including MacIntosh, Dunbar, and Hugh Mackay Jr. and escorted by Cuthbert and his rangers. Thomas Eyre, a young cadet who would soon become a deputy Indian agent to the Cherokees, also rode with Oglethorpe's expedition. Several Indian guides directed the group's travels and kept them well fed on turkey, deer, buffalo, and honey. Traveling under Oglethorpe's protection were two Choctaw Indians who were trying to return to their nation. Recently, British traders had been attacked by the Choctaws, and the Creeks had sworn revenge.

As the expedition neared Coweta, trader Thomas Wiggins rode out with two of the Creek headmen to meet them. They arrived after dark and "they hooped which our Indians answered," signaling their welcome. Wiggins, who by 1739 had been commissioned a captain for his work among the Indians, served as interpreter and provided the lodging for Oglethorpe once they were in Coweta.⁶⁹ Also present, although unclear as to whether he accompanied Oglethorpe or met him there, was Lieutenant Anthony Willey.⁷⁰

The meeting was a diplomatic success in that it reinforced amicable relations between the Creeks and the British, but it did not persuade the Creeks to abandon their policy of neutrality by committing to all-out warfare against the Spanish. Although

⁶⁹Copy of the Proceedings of the Assembled Estates of All the Lower Creek Nation, Aug. 21, 1739; EM 14204:87; George Dunbar to Harman Verelst, Oct. 4, 1739, *CRG*, vol. 22, pt. 2:216; Anonymous, "A Ranger's Report of Travels with General Oglethorpe in Georgia and Florida, 1739-1742, in Newton D. Mereness, ed., *Travels in the American Colonies* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1916), 218-21.

⁷⁰Copy of the Proceedings of the Assembled Estates of All the Lower Creek Nation, Aug. 21, 1739, EM 14204:87; *CRG*, 04:372, July 17, 1739; Thomas Eyre to Robert Eyre, Dec. 4, 1740, in *OG*, 2:500.

Oglethorpe could not make a personal appeal to the more distant Cherokees, he sent Cadet Thomas Eyre as deputy Indian agent to request that they send warriors to join the British forces against Spain. He brought with him a captain's commission for Samuel Brown, a "noted and well-esteemed trader" among the Cherokees, hoping he could "bring down a considerable body of that nation" and "march at the head of them." He commissioned another trader, Samuel Holmes, as Brown's lieutenant. Like other military agents among the Indians, Eyre spent some of his time "in reconciling differences between the Indians and traders," especially attempting to limit the use of rum. The Cherokees had recently suffered extensively from a smallpox epidemic, but they promised to send "a great body of chosen men" early in the spring. While Brown tried to recruit and ready the Indian allies, Eyre and Holmes returned to Frederica, bringing with them one of the Cherokee headmen "to assure him [General Oglethorpe] of their readiness to assist him."⁷¹ With a strong line of defensive fortifications, regular and provincial soldiers, and Indian allies in place, Georgia was ready for war.

* * * * *

The War of Jenkins' Ear officially began on October 23, 1739 and ended with the Treaty of Aix-la-Chappelle in 1748. On the southern frontier of North America, the war was fought in predominantly four phases: Oglethorpe's invasion of Spanish Florida in 1740, two years of raids and shoring up defenses from 1740 to 1742, a Spanish invasion

⁷¹James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, Oct. 11, 1739, in *OG*, 1:417; Thomas Eyre to his Brother, Dec. 23, 1739, in *OG*, 1:422; *CRG*, 2:429, May 2, 1743; *CRG*, 4:424, 463, 465, Sept. 25-29, 1739, Dec. 3, 6, 1739; *CRG*, 5:276, Dec. 18, 1739; An Abstract from My Journals From My Attending General Oglethorpe to the Indian Nations to Raising of the Siege of St Augustine, in *OG*, 2:506.

of Georgia in 1742, and a period of occasional raids through 1745. All phases of the war presented opportunities for the military to interact with the natives, not only on the warfront but also closer to home.

When the war was announced in late October, Oglethorpe had already received orders “to annoy the Spaniards” earlier in the month and had begun preparations for his invasion of Florida. The Creeks and Cherokees had been alerted and were supposed to be sending hundreds of allies. The Yamacraw Toonahowi, Tomochichi’s nephew, had already “gone with 200 men against the Spaniards” and Oglethorpe’s forces were not far behind.⁷² In late November, the combined Chickasaw and Yuchi war party arrived in Savannah. They were received by William Stephens, who believed they were “highly pleased” to hear that war had finally come and were eager to join the action. After a hospitable reception, the Indians, conducted by Lieutenant Dunbar, began their travels to join Oglethorpe.⁷³

In the beginning of December, Oglethorpe led a reconnaissance party of about two hundred men, including regulars, rangers, militia, and Indians, which prowled around the St. John’s River and Florida territory. Receiving a timid response from the Spanish, the Georgians regarrisoned Fort St. George. When the Spanish cavalry and soldiers “showed themselves as if they intended to attack us,” the Indians charged, running them off. Their presence terrorized the Spanish, who withdrew to a small radius surrounding

⁷²James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, Oct. 5, 1739, *CRG*, vol. 22, pt. 2:217-18; *Gentleman’s Magazine*, 10:129, March 1740; Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 101.

⁷³*CRG*, 4:458, 460, Nov. 24, 28, 1739.

St. Augustine. With the open country cleared, several parties of Indians were detached “to scour the country and to bring us intelligence.” The Indians discovered two forts, Fort Picolata and Fort Pupo, which guarded either end of a ferry passage near St. Augustine. The next day, the Indians led a detachment, headed by Lieutenant Dunbar and including Thomas Eyre, to observe the forts. The detachment noted the location, destroyed the Spanish boats used to cross the river into Georgia, and returned to Frederica.⁷⁴

On New Year’s Day, Oglethorpe initiated another attack on the outlying forts protecting Saint Augustine. Again having only about two hundred men, the Indians remained a vital component of the force. Capt. William Gray and the Squirrel King were there leading the Chickasaws, a trader named James Hewitt commanded the Yuchis, and Toonahowi and Hillyspilli directed the Yamacraws and Creeks. Capt. Jones and Capt. Jacob Matthews helped to direct the natives, and also present were Lieutenant Dunbar and both Mackays. Upon the initial landing, the Indians “drove in” the Spanish patrols and burned three guard houses. The troops moved on to the two forts the Indian allies had discovered the previous month. At daybreak on January 7, the Indians, who preceded the rest of the troops, “surprised and burnt” Fort Picolata. When Oglethorpe arrived with the larger part of the army two hours later, the collective group moved against Fort Pupo. While the troops and rangers worked to create breastwork defenses and move heavy artillery, the Indians “advanced near as they could” to “divert the

⁷⁴Thomas Eyre to his Brother, Dec. 23, 1739, in *OG*, 2:423; James Oglethorpe to the Duke of Newcastle, Jan. 22, 1740, in *OG*, 2:442.

besieged with brisk firing.” For several hours, the Indians “kept the Spaniards so amused that they did not discover our men” who kept working unbeknownst to the Spanish. With the breastwork completed, the Spanish could not fire upon the English, and they ultimately surrendered. Oglethorpe proclaimed the victory of great consequence, “since thereby the communication with the Creek Indians is secured, and [the] means of invading by land is taken away.” Oglethorpe and the troops returned to Frederica to plan his attack on Saint Augustine, leaving a contingent led by Hugh Mackay Jr. to occupy the fort for the next six months.⁷⁵

While waiting to launch his major foray into Spanish Florida, Oglethorpe hoped to receive more Indian allies. He expected thousands, especially after his reception among the Creeks at Coweta the previous year, but at most only a few hundred fought with the Georgians at any one time. While the British were taking Fort Pupo, Thomas Eyre was returning to the Cherokee nation in an attempt to “hasten them down.”⁷⁶ Eyre was successful, returning on April 15, 1740 with an army of about two hundred – one hundred Cherokees, seventy Chickasaws, and twenty white volunteers. He was also hopeful that “a good body more” would be arriving later from both the Creek and the Cherokee nations.⁷⁷

⁷⁵James Oglethorpe to the Duke of Newcastle, Jan. 22, 1740 in *OG*, 2:443; James Oglethorpe to Col. Stephens, Feb. 1, 1740, *CRG*, vol. 22, pt. 2:312-16; Mark Carr to James Campbell, Jan. 28, 1740, in *OG*, 2:448; James Oglethorpe to William Stephens, Feb. 2, 1740, in *OG*, 2:452; Ivers, *Drums*, 100.

⁷⁶Thomas Eyre to Robert Eyre, Dec. 29, 1739, in *OG*, 2:424, 426; *CRG*, 5:277, Dec. 29, 1739; *CRG*, 4:487, Jan. 10, 1740.

⁷⁷*CRG*, 4:550, 552, 553-54, April 8&9, 12, 15, 1740.

With his forces marshaled and his plans in place, Oglethorpe invaded Florida on May 3, 1740. With Fort Picolata destroyed by the Indians and Fort Pupo securely in the hands of Mackay and his rangers, there were only two outlying forts left protecting St. Augustine. Fort Diego was located near the coast about fifteen miles north of the Spanish city. Fort Mosa, a fortification and community largely populated by runaway slaves, served as the last line of defense just on the outskirts of town. Oglethorpe knew that ‘the first thing necessary [was] the taking the forts that keep open their communications with the country.’ The combined British and Indian force thus marched to and surrounded Fort Diego under the cover of darkness on May 10. They hoped for a surprise attack at dawn the next morning, but the Spanish were aware of their presence and easily repulsed the attempt. The next day, however, the Spanish garrison, still surrounded, was offered lenient terms and agreed to surrender. George Dunbar and fifty regulars occupied the fort.⁷⁸

The British moved closer to St. Augustine. When they arrived at Fort Mosa, however, they found it abandoned. The Spanish had cleared the countryside and were now entirely holed up in the capital city. Oglethorpe set up a mobile detachment to harass any Spaniards who stepped outside of the city’s fortifications to keep them from foraging in the countryside. Trader James Hewitt, leading thirty Yuchi Indians, as well

⁷⁸James Oglethorpe to the Duke of Newcastle, May 14, 15, 1740, in *OG*, 2:459, 460; Ivers, *Drums*, 106.

as Thomas Jones and ten Yamacraws joined the party. Together, the group had close to 150 men.⁷⁹

This detachment was supposed to conduct nightly harassment patrols while the bulk of the British army landed on Anastasia Island, preparing to initiate an attack on St. Augustine. The psychological damage inflicted on the Spanish by the party was significant, but the commanding officers made a significant tactical blunder. Although the party was designed to be mobile and constantly on the move to remain undetected, the officers allowed the forces to take up residence in the abandoned Fort Mosa. On June 15, the Spanish launched a surprise attack that completely routed the British, capturing or killing over half of the party. This was the only defeat the British suffered in the war, but according to some sources, the Highlanders and Indians especially proved their valor. Even though caught unaware, they “fought their way and killed about 40 Spaniards,” including their commander, and found their way back to Oglethorpe’s base camp.⁸⁰

The defeat at Fort Mosa had a debilitating effect on the British, not just in terms of numbers but in morale. Through July, Oglethorpe attempted to stay on track with his plan to attack St. Augustine, but a variety of factors were against him. He finally abandoned the plan, and the British forces left Florida on July 26, 1740.

Although Oglethorpe was unable to accomplish his goals and faced strong criticism in the wake of the Florida campaign, he was still very proud of his combined

⁷⁹*CRG*, 4:563, April 30, 1740; Ivers, *Drums*, 114.

⁸⁰Ivers, *Drums*, 111, 123; Thomas Jones to John Lydes, Sept. 18, 1740, in *OG*, 2:474.

ranger and Indian troops. In fact, some argued that if he had left most of the regulars to garrison Georgia and taken only “his own regiment . . . his Highlanders from Darien and rangers . . . with the Indians” then all of Florida would have capitulated with little effort. This assessment is obviously overly romanticized, but the unlikely allies-in-arms received high praise. At Fort Mosa, the rangers, the Highlanders, and the Indians, according to Oglethorpe, “fought with an obstinacy worthy of the Greeks or Romans.” At Fort Diego, the Indians had “behaved with great bravery.” And throughout the entire campaign, the General believed that all the Indians, but particularly the Creeks, “showed the utmost intrepidity and were of the greatest service.”⁸¹

While Oglethorpe’s forces were attacking Florida, military personnel stationed at the frontier forts and in the Indian nations were keeping tabs on the military situations closer to home. With the General abroad, they were responsible for the colony’s safety and needed to ensure that relations between the colony and her Indian allies remained amicable. Throughout 1740, the ranger captains routinely sent information regarding the activity in the Indian nations to the magistrates at Savannah. This included not only the activity and disposition of the natives, but of other important characters as well, including the traders and rival Europeans.

Lieutenant Kent at Augusta and Lieutenant Willey at Okfuskee joined trader Thomas Wiggins in supplying the vital information. Oglethorpe, anxious for Indian allies, was concerned when, month after month, they did not materialize in the numbers

⁸¹Thomas Jones to John Lydes, Sept. 18, 1740, in *OG*, 2:474-75; James Oglethorpe to Lord Egmont, Jan. 25, 1741, in *OG*, 2:536.

he expected, especially from the Creeks. Finally, Lieutenant Willey was able to provide some insight. The influential headman Chigelli had lately been exhibiting “an unusual coldness towards meddling in the wars that we are engaged in against Spain.” The mico could not forbid the Creek warriors from going, but he had been telling many that “they had no business to interpose among the white mens Quarrels.” Willey also understood, however, that Malatchi disagreed with Chigelli, and thus perhaps General Oglethorpe could convince him to encourage the Creek allies.⁸² When the French began actively working to recruit native allies among the Creeks in the spring and summer of 1740, the fort commanders were the first to alert the magistrates in Savannah.

Lieutenant Willey warned that enemies of the colony had been “tampering with the Indians” hoping to break their alliance with the British. Kent described the “several attempts” made by the French to woo the Creek, including the kinds and amounts of presents made to them. He could also happily report, however, that they remained “firm in their friendship with us.”⁸³ In fact, they also were the ones who reported when there was a rupture between the French and the Indians, such as the December 1739 attack upon the Chickasaws. In July 1740, Willey warned that eighty Cherokees were on the warpath, but as they were moving against the French, they “forebode no ill to the English.”⁸⁴ In June, Lieutenant Kent had to restore order in the Creek country after unlicenced traders had begun a riot there. The military presence was clearly needed to

⁸²*CRG*, 4:565, May 3, 1740.

⁸³*CRG*, 4:552, 563, 585, April 12, 30, June 2, 1740.

⁸⁴*CRG*, 4:471, 618, Dec 19, 1739, July 14, 1740.

serve as enforcement, for the traders would frequently “decide controversies [among themselves] by force, rather than submit to any Judicature.”⁸⁵

With Oglethorpe and the troops back in Georgia at the end of the summer and the fort commanders keeping an eye on the Indian nations, Georgia entered the second phase of the war. Oglethorpe and the British war officials were certain that Spain would strike Georgia, but they did not know when. Thus began a period of painful waiting, hoping in the meantime to shore up defenses and prepare for the inevitable.

In the interim, most of the king’s regiment was stationed at Frederica. Hugh Mackay, Jr. and a small party of rangers kept watch nearby at Fort Saint Andrews on Cumberland Island. To the west, Fort Argyle had four rangers under Capt. Lachlan Mackintosh. Kent and his rangers remained at Augusta. Although the total number of Georgia rangers totaled only about forty, Oglethorpe created two new fortifications in 1740 to help defend the frontier: Mount Venture and Mount Pleasant.⁸⁶ (See Map 3.)

Mount Venture, located on the Altamaha River, was to protect the colony’s southwest frontier. In October 1740, Jacob Matthews, who had led some of the Indian allies in the recent invasion of Florida, was offered a captaincy and ordered to raise a garrison of twenty rangers. Matthews and his lieutenant, William Francis, took their time, and the fort was not established until summer 1741. Neither commander spent much time there, however, before Matthews’ death in June 1742.⁸⁷ Mount Pleasant, on the

⁸⁵*CRG*, 4:585, 608, June 3, 30, 1740.

⁸⁶Ivers, *Drums*, 134, 137, 139; Mr. Jones to Mr. Harman Verelst, Oct. 6, 1740, *CRG*, vol. 22, pt. 2:427; *CRG*, vol. 4, pt. 2: 127, April 18, 1741.

⁸⁷*JWS*, 1:45, Feb. 24, 1742; Ivers, *Drums*, 142-44.

other hand, had a much more capable leader. Sometimes known as the Yuchi Fort, this fortification was situated three miles west of the old Palachicola garrison but on the Georgia side of the river. Its garrison was authorized two officers and twelve rangers. Trader Thomas Wiggins, who had long had major influence among the Creeks and remnant Chickasaws and Yuchis in the area, was commissioned as a captain to command the fort. Lieutenant Willey became his second-in-command, while long-time Creek trader Ambrose Morrison took over at the Okfuskee Fort.⁸⁸

Once stationed at Mount Pleasant, Wiggins and Willey continued to keep the magistrates well informed and continued to broker relations with the Indians. Having lived among the Indians for years, probably decades, Wiggins “had acquired their language so perfectly, as well as a through knowledge of their manner of living, and their several disposition towards each other, that they look on him with great regard and were frequently influenced by his advice.” These skills were what made him an ideal military candidate for the frontier and why Oglethorpe positioned him there.⁸⁹ In October 1740, Wiggins and Willey escorted a handful of Creek headmen to visit with Oglethorpe, hoping to offer their services to the General. While in Frederica, the military commanders received their own orders “relating to their future conduct in those Indian nations.” Whatever those instructions involved, clearly their presence among the Indians was expected and valued.⁹⁰ Later that month, Wiggins was in the Creek nation trying to

⁸⁸Ivers, *Drums*, 141; *CRG*, vol. 4, pt. 2: 86, Feb. 7, 1741; *JWS*, 2:222, July 1, 1745.

⁸⁹*JWS*, 1:105, July 5, 1742.

⁹⁰*CRG*, vol. 4, pt. 2:13, 21, Oct. 14, 1740, Nov. 3, 1740.

regulate Indian-white relations when some irate traders “beat and imprisoned” him. Apparently, whatever rules he was trying to enforce toward regulating the trade and improving relations were not looked upon favorably by that set of traders. In March 1742, he provided letters of introduction for a Creek war party and forwarded them on to Secretary Stephens with a request to procure provisions for them on their way to the General.⁹¹ The Wiggins/Wiley pairing at Mount Pleasant was extremely useful for the Indian relations of Georgia, but in the summer of 1742, Georgia would lose both of these cultural brokers – in June, Lieutenant Wiley committed suicide with no warning, and Capt. Wiggins died in July after a long illness.⁹²

Lieutenant Richard Kent, commanding Augusta since 1738 and promoted to captain in 1740, continued his usual services of escorting Indians, providing diplomatic information on the disposition and actions of the Indians, and settling differences between them and the traders. The Creeks, Cherokees, and Chickasaws all took advantage of his presence to conduct them safely through the British colony.⁹³ He alerted the magistrates when the Creeks and Cherokees began fighting in February 1741 and helped to coordinate a peaceful agreement between the two when both sides requested “the Interposition of the White men (English) to make them friends again.”⁹⁴ His handling of the disagreements between the traders within the nations, reconciling their

⁹¹CRG, vol. 22, pt. 2:432, May 22, 1740; JWS, 1:58, March 31, 1742.

⁹²CRG, 5:631, June 9, 1742; JWS, 1:100, June 27, 1742.

⁹³Ivers, “Soldiers” in Cashin, *Colonial Augusta*, 79; CRG, vol. 4, pt. 2: 88, 162, Feb. 11, June 9, 1741; JWS, 1:91, 92, June 8, 10, 1742.

⁹⁴CRG, vol. 4, pt. 2:81, 103, Feb. 2, 1741, March 12, 1741.

differences “with great prudence & care,” meant both the natives and the traders appreciated his skills and the calm it brought to their relations.⁹⁵

Capt. Dunbar spent the summer of 1741 in the Indian nations, working to “keep them steady in our interest at this important juncture.” Oglethorpe needed a military envoy to represent him since both “the French, as well as the Spanish, are busy.” Oglethorpe had just received word that additional troops were arriving in St. Augustine, and he hoped that Capt. Dunbar could procure some more warriors to help defend the colony.⁹⁶

Dunbar happily reported that Creeks remained “very well disposed” towards the British and thus frequently sent out small raiding parties to be directed by Oglethorpe against the Spanish. These Indian raids were the basis of the warfare between the English and the Spanish from the fall of 1740 through the spring of 1742. Though small, they were nevertheless effective. The Spaniards “were miserably harassed, hardly daring to stir out.” Although the Creeks had been reticent to break their neutrality and to initiate open warfare against the Spanish, Chigelli promised more aid to the British in June 1741. Thomas Jones, the mixed-blood ranger captain, continued to serve Oglethorpe during this period by leading many of the Indian raids. In November 1741, an Indian war party led by Jones brought back to Frederica two Spanish prisoners. At the end of the year, Jones

⁹⁵CRG, 23:122, Oct. 23, 1741; Edward J. Cashin, “The Gentlemen of Augusta” in *Colonial Augusta*, 35. The principal traders put so much confidence in Kent that they requested that the Trustees increase his authority in settling disputes between them. See CRG, 6:112-113, Aug. 28, 1744.

⁹⁶CRG, vol. 4, pt. 2: 127, 154, 236, April 20, May 29, Sept 9, 1741; James Oglethorpe to the Duke of Newcastle, May 12, 1741, in OG, 2:580.

organized twelve South Carolinians into a ranger party and was commissioned captain. They were stationed on St. Simon's Island and were in the perfect position to take part in the next big action of the war – the Spanish invasion of Georgia.⁹⁷

The Spanish fleet was first sighted off the coast on June 22, 1742. They engaged some of Oglethorpe's fleet in the ensuing weeks, but it was not until July 5 that they initiated a landing on St. Simon's Island. The Indian allies immediately made their presence known, conducting nighttime raids and carrying off five prisoners. Present to participate in this campaign were, at the very least, the Squirrel King and his Chickasaws, Toonahowi and the Yamacraws, and a small number of Lower Creeks. Captains William Gray and Thomas Jones were also present and probably helped to direct the Indians. When the Spanish began their overland march towards Fort Frederica, they ran into a ranger patrol who promptly alerted Oglethorpe. The General, hoping to attack the Spanish along the narrow trail rather than at the open clearing near Frederica, immediately raced out of the fort, leading thirty highlanders, Jones' party of rangers, and the Indian allies. The surprise charge was a complete success, and the British troops claimed a favorable defensive spot to wait for the counterattack. The resulting Battle of Bloody Marsh would be the Spaniards' only real engagement with the British in Georgia and clearly went in Oglethorpe's favor. The Indian allies pursued the Spanish for the

⁹⁷CRG, vol. 4, pt. 2:154, May 29, 1741; Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 109; James Oglethorpe to Egmont, Jan. 25, 1741, in *OG*, 2:536; Ivers, *Drums*, 147-49.

next week, keeping a close eye on them and conducting fatal raids until the Spanish sailed for Florida on July 18.⁹⁸

After the Spanish withdrawal, the War of Jenkins' Ear in the southern colonies flagged to nothing more than periodic raids back and forth across the Anglo-Spanish border. In these, the Indian allies were of course preeminent, as were the military personnel in charge of recruiting, transporting, or leading them. In the wake of the summer 1742 deaths of Wiggins and Willey, trader John Barnard was offered the captaincy at Fort Mount Pleasant. He was as capable as his predecessors, and he and Capt. Kent at Augusta remained the colony's most crucial military personnel near the Indian nations. As before, they continued to supply valuable information, escort Indians safely around the colony, and mediate relations between the British and the natives. In April 1743, Kent reported that he had just returned from the Indian nations, where "every thing was quiet and well." A year later, however, he warned that the French were attempting "to alienate the good will of the Indians from us" but promised to keep "a watchfull eye upon them."⁹⁹ He also rounded up all sorts of troublesome people who could potentially cause problems in the Indian nations, including Spanish deserters, a French troublemaker, and a man named Knowles who "had been discover'd tampering

⁹⁸Anonymous, "Ranger Report" in Mereness, *Our First Visit*, 232-5; Francis Moore to the Trustees, Sept. 11, 1742, in *OG*, 2:632-33; "Frederica in Georgia, July 9," *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Sept. 30, 1742, Issue 720, p. 2; Ivers, *Drums*, 157, 160, 164-67; *CRG*, 5:605, March 11, 1743.

⁹⁹*JWS*, I:179, 191, 219, March 7, April 9, June 22, 1743; *JWS*, 2:91, 120, 152, April 8, 9, July 4, Oct. 1, 1744.

with the Indians stirring them up to a quarrel with the English.”¹⁰⁰ When minor problems erupted in 1744 and 1745 between the Creeks and the English traders or government officials, Capt. Kent was the one who restored amicable relations. In the first instance, he offered to travel to speak to General Oglethorpe on their behalf and returned with news that reconciled them. In the latter instance, the captain “had a long talk together” with the Indians himself and “all ended in a perfect Peace.”¹⁰¹

Through the midpoint of the 1740s, both Kent and Barnard continued to escort numerous Indian war parties to Frederica to take directives from General Oglethorpe or, after his departure in July 1743, Major William Horton. These were usually personally recruited and escorted by the military captains.¹⁰² Horton understood the protocol surrounding their reception and acted accordingly, providing the requisite respect, fanfare, and presents to each group of native allies upon their arrival in Frederica.¹⁰³ To a lesser extent, Thomas Jones, William Gray, and Hugh Mackay Jr. continued to direct the Indian allies as well. In May 1743, the Trustees’ accountant had to settle old debts to Captains Mackay, Jones, and Gray for providing for “Indians that were going to wait on his Excellency” at various times throughout 1742. On June 5, 1744, twenty-three Chickasaws arrived in Savannah on “their way to Frederica, to serve against the enemy.”

¹⁰⁰*JWS*, 2:100, 193, 261, May 5, 1744, Feb. 2, Dec. 12, 1745.

¹⁰¹John Terry to the Trustees, Aug. 1, 1744, *CRG*, 24:260; *JWS*, 2:229, July 20, 1745.

¹⁰²For examples see *JWS*, 1: 169, 179, 191, 219, 220, Feb. 9, March 7, April 9, June 22, June 27, 1743 and *JWS*, 2:121, 215, 216, July 6, 1744, April 9, 11, 1745.

¹⁰³For examples see *JWS*, 1:233, July 30, 1743 and *JWS*, 2:80, 98, 149, March 12, May 1, Sept. 24, 1744.

They had to tarry a few days in town, however, awaiting the arrival of Capt. Jones “whom they expected here to go with them.”¹⁰⁴

In the meantime, the Spanish-allied Yamassees also continued their raids, and the most devastating and significant one occurred in November 1742 when they attacked Mount Venture, Capt. Jacob Matthews’ post on the Altamaha River. Lieutenant William Francis, commander since Matthews’ death in May, was in Frederica at the time, but his wife and child and five rangers were all either killed or captured. As the fort was part of a trading compound in which Mary Musgrove was involved, the Creeks took this attack personally, and it helped to sway them to a tighter alliance with the British.¹⁰⁵ With the momentum of revenge there to rally the Georgians and the Indian allies, Oglethorpe initiated one more assault upon Florida in March 1743. In an early engagement, the Creek warriors killed about twenty Spaniards and collected five scalps before most of them returned home. Twenty new warriors sent down by Capt. Mackay arrived on March 18, followed two days later by a coalition of seventy Creek and Cherokee warriors. But neither these nor the British could successfully engage the Spanish or their Indian allies. The entire force was back home by April.¹⁰⁶

The Yamassees made another successful foray into Georgia in January 1744. They attacked a small fortified plantation, plundered the house, and took five men

¹⁰⁴ *JWS*, 2:109, June 5, 1744.

¹⁰⁵ “Extract of a Letter from Frederica in Georgia, dated February 1, 1743/4,” *American Weekly Mercury*, March 1-7, 1744, Issue 1261, p. 3; John Dobell to the Trustees, Nov. 30, 1742, *CRG*, 23:437; Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 100.

¹⁰⁶ [Edward Kimber], *A Relation or Journal of a late Expedition* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1976), esp. 15-16, 28-29.

prisoner. Horton sent for “a small party of Creek Indians who were on the Main, with some rangers” and ordered them to pursue the Spanish allies. They caught up to them, engaged them in battle, and recaptured the British prisoners. Five Yamassees were killed, and the rest fled, but Toonahowi, Tomochichi’s nephew and leader of the Yamacraws, was “shot through the breast and died immediately.”¹⁰⁷ The British Indians continued their raids into Spanish Florida throughout 1744, and Major Horton frequently reported on their successes. An Upper Creek Indian raid in April resulted in two Negro and one Spanish prisoners and six Spanish deaths. The raid provided the added benefit of important intelligence that the Negro prisoners supplied to Horton. In June, Horton reported that he had “sent out a party of Indians” to look for a party of Yamassees who were said to be “roving about again with some mischievous design.” War parties continued against Florida in the fall, when the Indians engaged a cavalry unit and captured three and killed twelve, “without one Indian being hurt.” In the spring of 1745, four war parties comprised of 115 Indian warriors were operating out of Frederica.¹⁰⁸

Although official peace between England and Spain would not come until the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, virtually all armed conflict on the Georgia-Florida border had ceased by 1745. The Creeks and the Cherokees were heading to war, and neither Indian nation could spare warriors nor was either one at liberty to alienate any of

¹⁰⁷CRG, vol. 4, pt. 2:117, March 30, 1741; CRG 5:657, July 26, 1742; “Extract of a letter from Frederica in Georgia, dated February 1, 1743/4,” *American Weekly Mercury*, March 1-7, 1744, Issue 1261, p. 3; JWS, 2:65, Jan. 28, 1744.

¹⁰⁸JWS, 2:93, 111, 149, April 17, June 9, September 24, 1744; *Gentleman’s Magazine*, 15:445, Aug. 1745; Ivers, *Drums*, 212.

the European nations.¹⁰⁹ The War of Jenkins's Ear thus ended on the southern frontier with a whimper.

* * * * *

As the war wound down, Georgia's military faced a drastic reduction, and consequently, the military personnel involved in intercultural relations with the natives changed significantly. After Oglethorpe's departure in 1743, Georgia provincial troops, including the rangers, were reorganized under the king's command. Hugh Mackay, Sr. retired; Hugh Mackay, Jr. had died in December 1742. After the Spanish Indians destroyed Mount Venture in 1742 and the Georgians abandoned Fort Okfuskee in 1743, Fort Argyle became an important defense post again. John Milledge became its commander, while William Francis and Thomas Jones commanded ranger troops which were divided at different posts along the coastal islands. William Horton remained with the regiment at Frederica until 1747 when Alexander Heron assumed command. Fortunately, the leadership of the two forts closest to the Indians, Augusta and Mount Pleasant, remained constant under Captains Kent and Barnard respectively. In December 1746, however, the British government determined that the colony's frontier could be adequately protected by the regular troops alone, and all of Georgia's provincial troops, including the rangers, the Highlanders, and the navy, were disbanded in 1747. For a year, the frontier forts were empty until detachments of regulars finally garrisoned Fort Augusta and Darien. With both royal troops and money needed elsewhere in the British

¹⁰⁹Ivers, *Drums*, 196; John Pitts Corry, *Indian Affairs in Georgia, 1732-1756* (Philadelphia: George S. Ferguson, Co., 1936), 131-32.

empire, Georgia received very little of either. In February 1749, Heron sought help from South Carolina, which had a well-established force of both provincial and regular troops. They also had the finances to establish frontier forts and garrison them, including Fort Moore, just across the river from Augusta, and the Congaree fort on the river of the same name. In 1749, even the British regular troops stationed in Georgia were deactivated, and from 1750 on, most of the native-British military relations on the southern frontier would be conducted by the military personnel of South Carolina, not Georgia.¹¹⁰

After the Georgia regular troops were disbanded, Governor William Bull of South Carolina sent a detachment of thirty Carolina troops to garrison Fort Augusta. Their commander was initially Lt. George Cadogan, who had also served in Oglethorpe's regiment, and then Lt. White Outerbridge. Fort Augusta was the only Georgia fort kept in service.¹¹¹ Throughout the remainder of the Trustee period, there were constant concerns about the colony's state of defense. There were not enough active fortifications, not enough rangers, and not enough presents to woo the only other possible component of defense, the Indians. Although the Trustees had been discharged of any responsibility for the defense of Georgia in 1738, Secretary of War Henry Fox later requested their advice in determining what was needed in the colony. They reminded

¹¹⁰Ivers, *Drums*, 185-214 passim; Johnson, *Militiamen*, 13; Joshua Piker, *Okfuskee: A Creek Indian Town in Colonial America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 35; Benjamin Martyn to the President and Assistants, Jan. 2, 1749, *CRG*, 31:117.

¹¹¹Benjamin Martyn to the President and Assistants, Jan. 2, 1749, *CRG*, 31:117; Ivers, "Soldiers" in *Colonial Augusta*, 82; *CRG*, 6:235, June 4, 1749; Governor Glen to Lieutenant Governor Dinwiddie, June 1, 1754, *DRIA 1750-1754*:528.

him that “the friendship of the Indians is absolutely necessary to be cultivated, for which purpose it is requisite that presents should be given them from time to time.” They also insisted that a “proper number of rangers” who could patrol efficiently on horseback was needed to “cover the several settlements.”¹¹² No provisions were made for the latter, and although a fund for Indian presents was jointly granted to South Carolina and Georgia in 1748, no further funds were received after March 1751 until sometime during the Seven Years’ War.¹¹³

By the time Georgia’s first royal governor, John Reynolds, arrived in 1754, the defensive measures of the colony were virtually nonexistent. One of the first orders of business was to greet the natives who had come to town to meet the new governor, but he lamented that there were no gifts to offer them. He worried that the Indians would “take it very ill to be dismiss’d without Presents.” Reynolds was also concerned about the other defenses for the colony, believing it to be “of the greatest Importance” to “have some troops in this defenceless and remote Province.” After taking stock of the resources available to him, the new governor thought that Georgia was “in danger of being destroyed” should one of their enemies attack because there were no soldiers, nor were there any weapons or fortifications “fit for service.”¹¹⁴

¹¹²Benjamin Martyn to Secretary of War Henry Fox, April 4, 1748, *CRG*, 31:91; *CRG*, 1:514, April 4, 1748.

¹¹³Benjamin Martyn to John Potter, Secretary to the Duke of Bedford, May 25, 1748, *CRG*, 31:92 ; Memorial of Benjamin Martyn, June 3, 1754, *CRG*, 26:449.

¹¹⁴John Reynolds to Board of Trade, Dec. 5, 1754, *CRG*, 27:34; Memorial of John Reynolds, Dec. 5, 1754, *CRG*, 27:35.

As Britain and France moved closer to war, Reynolds became increasingly concerned about the colony's inability to defend itself. In February 1755, he felt compelled to acquaint the Board of Trade of the "Great and absolute occasion there is for some troops, and likewise Indian presents, the necessity of both are more and more apparent every day." Frederica was totally dismantled and in ruins. Augusta had "the only fortification in the province," but it was "so rotten that a great part of it is propt up, to prevent its falling." Reynolds proposed a grand plan for the defense of the colony, including naming fort locations and types, artillery needed, and numbers of troops at each garrison, but he provided no adequate way of implementing or financing it.¹¹⁵

Two years later, when Henry Ellis was appointed Georgia's next royal governor, he took stock of the colony's defenses and came to the same dismal conclusions his predecessor did. The frontier, which should have been "cover'd by forts," had none. That, however, was a moot point, for even if it did have adequate fortifications, it had "no troops to defend them, except a single Independent company of forty men, and that belonging to another province." In this sad state, Ellis recognized that the only hope of any assistance would come from the Indian allies; but with no presents, the Georgians were "likewise destitute of the most effectual means for securing that assistance."¹¹⁶

When the Seven Years' War officially began in 1756, Georgia still had no viable defense system. This situation was brought into clear focus in September when a

¹¹⁵John Reynolds to the Board of Trade, Feb. 28, 1755, *CRG*, 27:59; John Reynolds to the Board of Trade, Jan. 1, 1756, *CRG*, 27:103; Representation to the Board of Trade from John Reynolds, Jan 5, 1756, *CRG*, 27:106-111.

¹¹⁶Henry Ellis to Board of Trade, Oct. 5, 1756, *CRG*, 27:121.

problem between the Creeks and the settlers arose on the frontier. Western expansion had brought Georgia settlers to the banks of the Ogeechee River, and the typical problems of encroachment, including a scarcity of animals to hunt, meant that tensions ran high. On September 3, a group of disgruntled Creeks lurked around the settlement, stole some horses, and were pursued by the whites. A skirmish ensued, in which three of the four Indians were killed. The potential for retribution was real, and settlers along the frontier feared the worst. In this crisis, Fort Augusta served as the place for representatives of both cultures to find an amicable solution.

White settlers, wanting to be safe rather than sorry, sought refuge in the fort and alerted the garrison to the incident. At the time, two Creek headmen, Handsome Fellow and the Okfuskee Captain, were there as well, having stopped on their way back home from Charles Town. In the Indian nations, Indian runners had already alerted the headmen of both the Upper and Lower Creeks. Although the Creeks had a viable faction who favored the French, only a very few were willing to actually engage in war with the British. The Lower Creek headmen sent an amicable letter to Reynolds, and the Upper Creek headmen told Lt. Outerbridge, commander at Augusta, that their nation hoped to keep the peace. For the Georgians' part, Augusta traders took a friendly message to the Creek headmen under the guard of Handsome Fellow and the Okfuskee Captain as they returned home.¹¹⁷ South Carolina sent Capt. Dan Pepper to the Creek nation to ensure that the situation did not escalate into war, and Outerbridge did his part at Augusta. He

¹¹⁷John Reynolds to the Board of Trade, Sept. 26, 1756, *CRG*, 27:290; Henry Ellis to the Board of Trade, March 11, 1757, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 2:7; Cashin, "Gentlemen," in Cashin, *Colonial Augusta*, 41; Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 179-80.

collected affidavits regarding the original incident and forwarded them on to Governor Lyttleton of South Carolina and almost certainly to Governor Reynolds of Georgia. He was entrusted with the responsibility of making sure that the governors' correspondence to the Creek headmen was "carefully delivered and interpreted." When the headmen responded, he not only forwarded their answers but offered his assessment of their stance and disposition. He knew the Indians did not want war and advised the governors that "the Indian talk at present seems very fair."¹¹⁸ Reynolds had sent out the colony's militia to capture the whites involved in the murders, promising "to make satisfaction to the relations of the slain" Indians. The headmen blamed the incident on the "madness of some of our young people" and requested that the slate be wiped clean. Thus with the intercession of the Indian headmen, Georgia traders, the military personnel at Fort Augusta, and the South Carolina peace envoy under Dan Pepper, amicable relations between the two cultures were restored.¹¹⁹

Although the Ogeechee incident was a minor skirmish and both sides delicately avoided escalation, it had important repercussions. Understanding that the Indians, especially those backed by France, could exact extensive damage on the defenseless colony if so inspired, Georgia finally raised one troop of rangers in December 1756. Although the company was authorized seventy men, it raised only forty and had trouble providing for those. But the resurrection of the Georgia rangers also meant the return of

¹¹⁸White Outerbridge to Governor Lyttleton, Sept. 11, 23, 26, 1756, *DRIA 1754-1757*:185-87, 188, 190.

¹¹⁹John Reynolds to the Board of Trade, Sept. 26, 1756, *CRG*, 27:291; Headmen of the Lower Creeks to Governor Reynolds, Sept. 17, 1756, *DRIA 1754-1765*:192.

some familiar faces. This First Troop of Rangers was initially headed by Capt. John Barnard, the 1740-47 commander of Mount Pleasant. After his death in September 1757, John Milledge, who had commanded Fort Argyle from 1742-47, took over as captain of the company.¹²⁰

Georgia also began work rebuilding the fortifications in the colony. Settlers agreed to spend twelve days in the summer of 1757 refortifying Savannah and building four forts along the frontier rivers. This included restoring the ones at Augusta and Darien and building two new ones at Midway and Ogeechee. By the end of September, Savannah was heavily fortified, the four outposts were complete, and the bulk of the rangers were stationed at the Great Indian Pass on the Ogeechee River with orders to “make themselves perfectly acquainted with the Country.” Ellis hoped to raise two more troops of rangers so that they could guard the Altamaha River, where they could counter French inroads among the Indians and, according to the optimistic governor, “likewise will be ready to march” with the Creeks against the French at Fort Toulouse.¹²¹ While he waited in vain for funding for additional troops, the rest of the First Company of rangers was scattered to the other forts and at “the principal passes along the river Altamaha.” With Indian relations peaceful, the majority of the rangers’ responsibilities dealt with

¹²⁰ *CRG*, 7:398, September 20, 1756; John Reynolds to the Board of Trade, Sept. 26, 1756, *CRG*, 27:291; Henry Ellis to the Board of Trade, Jan. 1, 1758, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 1: 102-03; Ivers, “Soldiers,” in Cashin, *Colonial Augusta*, 83.

¹²¹ Henry Ellis to the Board of Trade, Aug. 1, 1757, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 1:40; Henry Ellis to William Pitt, Aug. 1, 1757, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 1:44; Henry Ellis to the Board of Trade, Sept 20, 1757, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 1:69; *CRG*, 16:161, Jan. 28, 1757.

capturing runaway slaves and deserters and suppressing the illegal trade with the Spanish in Florida.¹²²

Although the rangers certainly encountered Indians frequently on a day-to-day basis, they were also used in an official capacity to prepare a proper military welcome for the Indians arriving in town or to escort them in. When Ellis conducted a conference with over 150 Creek headmen in October 1757, he dispatched Capt. Milledge “to receive, accommodate and, with his Troop, to conduct them through the Settlements.” When Edmund Atkin, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Southern District, arrived in Georgia in October 1758, he was appointed an escort of twelve Georgia rangers. They accompanied him upriver to Fort Augusta and Fort Moore in the winter and were likely still with him when he finally headed to the Creek nation in the summer of 1759.¹²³

As always, the military force continued to provide useful diplomatic information about the disposition of the Indians and their relations with other European nations. Outerbridge at Augusta and the rangers on the frontier reported consistently to the Savannah officials, providing accounts of friendship, disturbances, factions, or French influence.¹²⁴ But given the small size of the military force in Georgia throughout the Seven Years’ War, much of that responsibility devolved upon other cultural brokers, such

¹²²Henry Ellis to the Board of Trade, July 20, 1758, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 1:162; Henry Ellis to Board of Trade, Jan. 28, 1759, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 1:176.

¹²³*CRG*, 7: 643, 644, Oct. 25, 29, 1757; *CRG*, 7:826, Oct. 10, 1758; Wilbur R. Jacobs, *Indians of the Southern Colonial Frontier: The Edmund Atkin Report and Plan of 1755* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1954), xxvii.

¹²⁴See *DRIA 1754-1765*:420-423, Dec. 26, 1757, *CRG*, 16:494, May 30, 1760, *CRG*, 8:514, March 10, 1761.

as the traders. In 1758, Georgia had one independent company from South Carolina stationed at Fort Augusta and still only one troop of rangers, languishing at half its authorized strength. In addition, attempts at securing royal funds for the rangers had been futile, and Ellis had kept them in operation first only by Lord Loudoun's credit, later by Ellis' own. At that time, he was "compelled to disband half their number" in attempt to prolong their activity on the frontier. With such small numbers, probably at this time only about twenty, the rangers did not have much opportunity to greatly influence native-Anglo relations. Ellis complained in October 1758 that the small force "constrains me to wink at many enormities committed by our own people & the savages." With such a considerably smaller ranger force than before, there were necessarily fewer instances of military involvement in frontier activity.¹²⁵

The Georgia ranger force would finally receive funding and authorization for enlargement in 1760, after British-Cherokee relations took a turn for the worse. Cherokee war parties had accompanied the British in their attack against the French at Fort Duquesne in 1759. On their way home, however, they were attacked by Virginia backcountry settlers. Pro-British Indian leaders could not keep the peace, and the Cherokees were in open war with the English through 1761.

South Carolina bore the brunt of the Cherokee attacks and thus recalled her troops stationed at Fort Augusta to shore up defenses at more strategic locations closer to home. Fortunately, ranger authorization came from England, and Georgia filled the first troop

¹²⁵Henry Ellis to the Board of Trade, May 20, 1758, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 2:157; Henry Ellis to William Pitt, Oct. 31, 1758, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 2:169; Henry Ellis to the Board of Trade, Oct. 25, 1758, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 2:165.

and raised a second. Each troop was authorized seventy men and the second troop was commanded first by James Powell and then by Edward Barnard. Rangers were scattered at various posts, including Fort Augusta, Fort Barrington on the Altamaha River, Fort Halifax at Savannah, Fort Argyle, and a few more scattered outposts on the coastal islands and the Ogeechee River.¹²⁶ After a few Indian raids in January 1760 on the west bank of the Savannah River resulted in deaths of Georgia settlers, however, the bulk of the ranger force under Capt. Milledge moved to Augusta.¹²⁷ Fort Augusta again served as a place of refuge and diplomatic meetings of the two cultures; the Creek nation officially remained neutral and helped to escort straggling backcountry settlers to the fort. They helped to ransom some Georgia settlers captured by the Cherokees, and they alerted Outerbridge and the rest of the Augusta garrison of the movement of Cherokee war parties. Without the presence of the military at the fort, the success of those Creek endeavors would have been much more complicated to achieve. When Augusta traders continued to trade with parties of Cherokees despite wartime, a move which might upset the friendly Creeks, Lt. Barnard and his rangers were sent to end the clandestine trade and to restore proper trading relations.¹²⁸

The Georgia military also encouraged Indian allies to begin warring against the Cherokees. When Capt. Milledge moved his rangers to Augusta in February 1760, he

¹²⁶CRG, 8:160, Oct. 10, 1759; CRG, 16:440, Feb. 14, 1760; Ivers, "Soldiers" in *Colonial Augusta*, 83; Johnson, *Militiamen*, 37-38.

¹²⁷CRG, 8:228, Feb. 23, 1760.

¹²⁸Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 212; Cashin, "Gentlemen," in Cashin, *Colonial Augusta*, 46.

had with him orders to offer bounties to the allied Indians for any Cherokee scalps that they brought in to the fort.¹²⁹ Although the British could not convince the entire Creek nation that a general war against the Cherokees was in the Creeks' best interest, at least a few small Creek parties ventured out to secure Cherokee scalps and collect the rewards. When one such party brought their war trophies to Savannah, the governor ordered the militia and rangers to line up in welcome.¹³⁰

Although the Georgians encouraged their native allies to war against Britain's enemies, there is no indication that rangers and Indians ever actively worked together in battle during the Seven Years' War as they had in the War of Jenkins' Ear. The southern colonies never came under direct French attack, and, despite Ellis' hopes of taking Fort Toulouse, the Georgians never initiated an attack against the French in Louisiana. The governor also chose not to employ Indian allies in raids against the French, believing that it "would be rash to attempt causing the Indians to break thro' their Neutrality." Because of the presence of a small but vocal French faction in the Creek nation, forcing the issue would result in the eruption of a civil war among the Indians, which would greatly threaten the Indian trade and the colony itself.¹³¹ Even against the Cherokees, the Creek nation never officially abandoned its neutrality, and the move to employ the Creeks against the native enemies secured only minimal success.

¹²⁹*CRG*, 8:248, Feb. 9, 1760; *DRS*, 17:121, Feb. 1760.

¹³⁰*DRS*, 17:158, April 24, 1760; *CRG*, 8:282, April 14, 1760.

¹³¹Henry Ellis to the Board of Trade, Nov. 25, 1757, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 1:87.

At any rate, the interaction of the Georgia military and native allies during raids and fights against the enemy did not reach anywhere near the proportions it had in the earlier war. Rangers and Indian scout parties may have cooperated as they patrolled the backcountry. Certainly their combined efforts were successful as Ellis reported that although the Cherokees were devastating the outlying settlements of South Carolina, “the parties of Rangers and Indians that we keep constantly scouting in the back parts, have prevented any late outrages being committed upon the inhabitants of this colony.”¹³² In fact, the Cherokee War would cost Georgia only a handful of settlers, those killed on the outskirts of Augusta in early 1760 before the rangers arrived.¹³³

The only other time Georgia citizens were in true danger from the Indians was on one day in May 1760 when the French faction among the Creeks instigated an incident that terrified the Georgians. On May 6, Creeks in the Upper Towns killed eleven of their traders, and probably would have killed more had it not been for the protection offered other traders by various British-allied headmen.¹³⁴ Ellis understood that this was usually akin to a declaration of war but felt certain he could maintain the peace in the long run. Most of the Creeks were as shocked by the event as were the Georgians. The first person to bring news of the massacre to Augusta was Robert French, a packhorseman. With him

¹³²Henry Ellis to the Board of Trade, May 15, 1760, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 1:250.

¹³³Henry Ellis to the Board of Trade, Feb. 15, 1760 footnote, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 1:228.

¹³⁴For details of the massacre and the response of both the Creeks and the Georgians, see Adair, *History*, 278-83, *CRG*, 8:348, July 28, 1760, 16:498, June 2, 1760, vol. 28, pt. 1:251, 252. For a concise and useful synopsis, see Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 216-22.

he brought another message from the headmen that they still strongly desired peace, so scarcely had the garrison heard of the massacre before they were already serving as a means to minimize the crisis. The messages of peace were quickly forwarded to the governor. Already in the fort at the time of French's arrival were two Creek men who had escorted a packhorse train safely to Augusta. In this time of crisis, their presence away from their nation meant that their lives were in danger, but Capt. Milledge ensured that the Indian guards returned safely. In June, the surviving traders arrived in Augusta under armed Indian guard, where Capt. Milledge and the rangers received both the traders and the guards.¹³⁵ At a time when South Carolina and the Cherokees were taking captives, holding them hostage for ransom, and in some cases, killing them, the Creeks and the Georgian military were careful to treat the other's representatives well to ensure the best chances for continued peace.

Although neither the French nor the English faction among the Creeks was completely satisfied in the wake of the trader massacre, peace with Britain was maintained. In a show of good faith, Upper Creek headman Handsome Fellow, who had been involved in the murders of the traders, brought a Cherokee scalp to Milledge at Augusta in September.¹³⁶

The Georgians thus avoided war with the Creeks, the South Carolinians subdued the Cherokees, and by 1761 the fighting on the southern frontier had virtually halted. In

¹³⁵Henry Ellis to Board of Trade, June 7, 1760, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 1:251; Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 217-18.

¹³⁶Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 221.

the 1763 Treaty of Paris which ended the Seven Years' War, defeated France relinquished all of its North American holdings, and the British and the natives were left to work out their own agreements for post-war America. The Indian congress at Augusta was set for November 1763, but in the meantime, there were large number of presents sitting at Augusta awaiting disbursement to the tribes. Lt. Barnard was in charge of these, and he advised sending only a few into the nations, withholding the majority until the conference. Barnard had also been present to certify the proper distribution of the presents in 1758, and it is probable that this military officer had been among the Indians frequently in the interim.¹³⁷ When in the months leading up to the conference South Carolina proposed changing the venue to Dorchester, the colonial governors called upon Lt. Barnard again. Both he and George Galphin, one of the most influential traders among the Creeks, were asked to "assist the Superintendent with their Interest and influence with the Indians" in persuading them to agree to travel to Dorchester instead of Augusta.¹³⁸ Clearly, the lieutenant's rapport with the Indians was held in high esteem. Although they could not convince the headmen to go to Carolina, they were instrumental in ensuring their presence at the conference in Augusta. In fact, the reality that the Indians preferred that the conference be held in Georgia over South Carolina shows the level of trust that the Georgian cultural brokers enjoyed among the natives and their influence over intercultural relations.

¹³⁷*CRG*, 9:79, July 14, 1763; Certificate of David Douglass and Edward Barnard, March 2, 1758, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 1:78; John Reynolds to the Board of Trade, April 17, 1758, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 1:139.

¹³⁸*CRG*, 9:99, Oct 11, 1763.

In the wake of the peace agreement, the entire diplomatic situation for the natives had changed. With France gone and Spain's power greatly reduced, the Creeks had no bargaining power, no leverage in their relations with the British. The Creeks had to cede more territory and to agree to new boundaries. New regulations in 1763 also meant that anyone could be involved with the trade, and no one colonial governor could control it. At the same time, Governor Wright demanded that troops remain garrisoned at Augusta after the war, and Edward Barnard was still at the fort in 1765. Hence, while some of the trading element changed, some of the military remained constant.¹³⁹

One final diplomatic incident shows how the military personnel's value and expertise among the Indians remained vital through the end of the period. On the night of December 28, 1763, Lt. Barnard open the door of his house to a South Carolinian who told him he had important news to relay. He reported that a renegade party of Creeks who lived among the Cherokees had killed fourteen South Carolina settlers at the Long Canes, but "as he would not give me the Particulars upon Oath," Barnard reserved judgement. The lieutenant had seen these wild rumors take on a life of their own many times before, and he was not going to be responsible for fanning the flames prematurely. The next day, a more reputable settler offered his testimony under oath, lending more credence to the rumor. At that time, therefore, Barnard felt it necessary to forward the report and affidavit to the governor. In response to the stories, some settlers seemed ready to initiate a war against the Creeks, a few even planning to stir up the Cherokees against them. The lieutenant, however, was able to offer some much-needed perspective.

¹³⁹Cashin, "Gentlemen," in Cashin, *Colonial Augusta*, 48-49.

Even if the rumors were true, he believed some of the responsibility needed to be placed on the Cherokees, for “as they have felt the Strength of the white people and have been thereby brought into great distress, they would wish to see the Creeks in the same situation.” Governor James Wright ascertained that the murders had taken place, but that “it was not a concerted measure but done by Stragglers.” Taking Barnard’s intuitive assessment to heart, he acknowledged further that it was “possibly promoted by the Cherokees with a view to involve us with the Creeks.” He therefore made no trade sanctions against the Creek nation and maintained the peace.¹⁴⁰

From the founding of the colony through the aftermath of the peace that ended the Seven Years’ War, Georgia’s military personnel played a crucial role in mediating Anglo-Native interaction. Like other cultural brokers, they supplied consistent and valuable diplomatic information concerning their native neighbors, their disposition, and their relations with the competing Europeans. They provided safe escorts for members of one society to the other, and served to recruit and direct Indian allies in times of warfare. They also served to mediate disturbances between Georgians and natives and helped to regulate trade relations to the mutual benefit of both cultures. They alone were responsible for collectively patrolling the backcountry areas, keeping a watchful eye on the frontier. To this end, they employed native methods and frequently worked side by side with the Indians. Rather than existing to make war against the natives, Georgia’s

¹⁴⁰Lieutenant Barnard to Governor Wright, Dec., 28, 1763, *CRG*, 9:111-12; Council Minutes, Jan. 16, 1764, *CRG*, 9:116.

military force was a presence of mediation that served to maintain peaceful relations between the colony and her native neighbors.

Chapter 4

“Send Us The Good Book”:

Missed Opportunities for Georgia’s Colonial Missionaries

One of the most obvious venues of cultural exchange between the British colonists and the American natives was religion. Attempts to introduce Indians to Protestant Christianity, however, necessitated a profound change in their whole cultural belief system, not just in religion. In the colonies, as in most mission theaters, conversion to Christianity went hand-in-hand with “civilization.” Indians could not be expected to have their hearts open to God unless they had first shucked their “savagery.” Under Protestant tutelage, an ideal native candidate for baptism would have previously adopted the idealized cultural traits of his colonial neighbors.

Missionaries who hoped to spread the word of God thus also expected to open the natives’ eyes to other European cultural mysteries. Cultural practices such as monogamy and patrilineal descent were frequently difficult for natives to absorb, but many elements of European culture did appeal to them. Foremost among these were medical knowledge and advanced technology. Firearms, metal tools, and writing had an obvious appeal to those who knew little of them. The allure of the white man’s medicine to the Indians was twofold. On one hand, the advanced medical knowledge itself offered hope for and often success in curing illness and disease, frequently

introduced to America by the colonists or their animals. On the other, even if the “advanced” medicine did not provide a remedy, the Europeans’ religion offered a plausible explanation for why the patients were ill in the first place – their sins. Their ailments were outward manifestations of their sins against God and his resulting displeasure. A “true cure” would only come by recognizing those sins and appealing to God for forgiveness.¹

The fact that some elements of European culture intrigued many natives gave missionaries an entree into working with the Indians as cultural brokers. Almost all of the original thirteen colonies were founded with at least some intentions of converting the natives. The oldest colonies – those in New England and the Chesapeake – had made concerted and sustained efforts to engage the local natives in religious education since the mid-1600s. John Eliot’s praying towns in seventeenth-century Massachusetts are legendary, not only for successful conversions but for educating native missionaries who could continue the work among their own people. Virginia’s Brafferton school (1723-1776) welcomed Indian students alongside white members of the William and Mary college community. Even the younger colonies had their missionaries, often supported by societies such as the Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and were making inroads among the natives by the eighteenth century. By the time Georgia was founded, there was a long history of religious exchange

¹James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 228-229.

between the natives and the colonists, though of course the majority of it was decidedly one-sided.²

Although these religious exchanges had their limitations, they still demonstrated that missionaries could effectively serve as brokers of cultural exchange. At the very least, missionaries had to learn the language of those to whom they hoped to preach. And since most hoped to eradicate major portions of the natives' cultures, they also had to be well informed about the practices and values they hoped to undermine. So while they had their own agendas, they were in a good position to bridge the cultures and to explain the cultural values of each to the other.

By most accounts, European missionaries enjoyed the most success among tribes who lived close to European settlements, were already in a state of cultural flux, and faced dwindling numbers.³ In Georgia, the case was no different. Tomochichi's band of Yamacraws numbered no more than two hundred and, in 1733, was trying to find its place in the new Southeast as a band independent from the Creeks while attempting to increase their connection to the Europeans. When Oglethorpe settled Savannah just miles from the Indians' village, the tribe was not only open to the idea of religious instruction, their chief lobbied for it. The question was, would Georgian missionaries heed the call?

²For a comprehensive description of education attempts among the natives in the colonial period, see Margaret Connell Szasz, *Indian Education in the American Colonies, 1607-1783* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1988).

³Axtell, *Invasion Within*, 221; Szasz, *Indian Education*, 142.

From the inception of the colony, the religious conversion of the natives was a leading motivation in the founding of Georgia. Both the Trustees in general and James Oglethorpe in particular believed that their philanthropic enterprise could benefit Indians as well as Europeans. “One aim...in settling this colony,” acknowledged a Salzburger immigrant, “is to provide these miserable people little by little with an ever increasing opportunity to know our Saviour.”⁴ Oglethorpe heralded the colony’s missionary intentions in his “New and Accurate Account of South Carolina and Georgia,” published as a promotional pamphlet the year before the colony’s founding. Oglethorpe argued that the Georgians would have a “good effect on the natives” so long as they did not “shamefully neglect their Conversion.”⁵ The original “Designs of the Trustees,” published in 1733 to explain their ideals, show that they had high hopes that their new colony and the people specifically recruited to settle it would provide “the example of a whole colony who shall behave in a just, moral, and religious manner.” This in turn, they argued, “will contribute greatly towards the conversion of the Indians” and reduce the influence of other colonists – most notably South Carolinians – who had previously shown the Indians the example of those “who have scarce any thing of Christianity but the name.”⁶

⁴*DRS*, 2:242.

⁵James E. Oglethorpe, “A New and Accurate Account of the Provinces of South Carolina and Georgia,” in Trevor R. Reese, *The Most Delightful Country of the Universe: Promotional Literature of the Colony of Georgia, 1717-1734* (Savannah, GA: Beehive Press, 1972), 140.

⁶Benjamin Martyn, “Some Account of the Designs of the Trustees for Establishing the Colony of Georgia in America, in Reese, *Most Delightful Country*, 72.

When William Stephens arrived in the colony as the Trustees' Secretary, he carried with him a set of instructions that included cultivating the Indians' learning of Christian ways. He was to monitor the religious education of the colonists as well, of course, and his orders were as follows: "As to Religious concerns: You are to recommend to the Magistrates that they encourage the children at School, and sometimes inspect their learning and exhort their parents to send them." The Trustees did not neglect the natives, however, for Stephens was also "to recommend to the Magistrates that they do the same by the Indian children."⁷ Clearly, the Trustees and Oglethorpe held conversion of the Indians as one of their primary goals.

In an early assessment, Oglethorpe argued that the Georgians could "reasonably hope to make converts and good subjects of the Indians in amity with us," and he felt certain that the colony could convert more Indians than did the Catholic Spanish.⁸ Oglethorpe attributed this to the nature of the Protestant population that would inhabit his colony, people who would treat the Indians well rather than employ the "inexpressible cruelties" used by the Spaniards. He was hopeful that in addition to English Protestants, the colony would welcome large contingents of other "pious Protestant sects." A great many of Georgia's earliest settlers were non-English Protestants seeking refuge from religious persecution. In the 1730s, contingents of Moravians, Salzburgers, and Scotch Highlanders settled in Georgia and left their impression on the new colony's

⁷Appendix B – Instructions to William Stephens from the Trustees, *JWS*, 1:262-263.

⁸Oglethorpe, "New and Accurate Account," in Reese, *Most Delightful Country*, 139.

development. With the exception of Catholicism, Georgia was an inclusive colony. One minister reported that “all sects and all types of people are tolerated, and all liberties are granted to them just as to other Englishmen. Even the Jews, of which there are already several families in the country, enjoy all privileges like the other colonists.”⁹ A Moravian Bishop, August Gottlieb Spangenburg, agreed, candidly stating that “there is no question here about religion. One is allowed to believe and hold what one wishes.”¹⁰

In Oglethorpe’s mind, the two goals of providing a refuge for various religious sects and moving towards the conversion of the natives were linked; they were both important motivations in the colony’s founding and elements that could help each other. In 1732, for instance, he wrote that he expected the presence of the Salzburgers in Georgia to have an salutary effect on their Indian neighbors. Oglethorpe anticipated that their presence would help the overall goal of converting the natives, claiming that allowing the Germans into the colony “is laying a Foundation for the Conversion of the Heathen.” At the same time, “they snatch a great number of poor Christians out of the Danger of Apostacy,” thereby accomplishing two very important goals.¹¹

The Trustees’ initial conception clearly included a plan for bringing Christianity to the local natives, and throughout the earliest years, they continued to draw much

⁹George Fenwick Jones, “John Martin Bolzius Reports on Georgia,” *GHQ* 1963 47(2):218.

¹⁰George Fenwick Jones and Paul Martin Peucher, eds., “‘We Have Come to Georgia with Pure Intentions’: Moravian Bishop August Gottlieb Spangenburg’s Letters from Savannah, 1735.” *GHQ* 1998 82(1):114.

¹¹Oglethorpe, “New and Accurate Account,” in Reese, *Most Delightful Country*, 139.

support, financial and otherwise, from well-meaning British citizens. The Trustees maintained a strong interest in the conversion efforts in Georgia and kept the prospect fresh on the mind of fortunate Britons who could contribute to the cause. Throughout the 1730s, donations continually arrived at the Trustees' office to support the mission, whether they were applied generally to the "conversion of the natives in Georgia," more specifically to finance the missionaries themselves "who are going, or shall hereafter go to Georgia," or in support of furnishing them with the necessary supplies, such as "proper books." Most donations came from anonymous sources who certainly varied in background and means. Contributions ranged from £1 to £100, but their donors all shared in the belief that "an Indian missionary" in Georgia was a cause worthy of their support.¹²

The Trustees had institutional help as well, especially from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, but their mission was not limited to the conversion of natives. The Georgia colonists too were in need of spiritual guidance, and the Trustees and the SPGFP hoped to ensure that the distant flock would not be neglected. In the planning stages of the colony, the Society had committed to support the religious activity in Georgia by paying the salary of a missionary. Therefore, in November 1732, the Trustees sent a memorial to the SPGFP, requesting them to "obtain

¹²For examples see *CRG*, 1:218, 221, 232 (quotation), 254, 270, 275, 29:174, and *EJ*, 243 (quotation), 247.

a missionary with Sallary.” For their part, they had ordered that “300 acres of Glebe to be set out” in Savannah to provide for the colony’s minister.¹³

But the first passage of immigrants to establish Georgia had already sailed on November 17, 1732. Among the passengers was Georgia’s first minister, Henry Herbert. Herbert had volunteered to accompany the colonists on their voyage over and to minister to them as they established the settlement at Savannah, but he never intended to stay in Georgia long.

In the meantime, the SPG and the Trustees agreed upon a permanent appointment. The Society had agreed to provide the annual salary of fifty pounds per year, but both authorities retained mutual power in filling the position. The Reverend Samuel Quincy appeared before the Trustees in December with a letter of recommendation, and they promised to “confer with the Incorporated Society” about his candidacy. Apparently neither party had any reservations, for the Trustees nominated him to the position, and the SPG approved.¹⁴

In Georgia, Herbert ministered to the colonists and presided over several births and burials, but he was himself in poor health. In April, the Trustees informed Oglethorpe that Quincy had embarked for the colony. With his failing health and the

¹³*EJ*, 9, Nov. 23, 1732.

¹⁴Trustee Memorial to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, Dec. 17, 1735, *CRG*, 32:196; *CRG*, 1:92, Dec. 21, 1732; Benjamin Martyn, “Reasons for Establishing the Colony of Georgia” in Reese, *Most Delightful Country*, 183.

assurance that a permanent appointment was on the way, Herbert left for England in May but died in transit.¹⁵

Quincy arrived in Savannah in mid-summer 1733, but his Georgia ministry did not thrive. He, too, suffered from poor health and within two years had made known his desires to return to England. During his time ministering in Georgia, he did oversee the construction of the parsonage, provided the rituals for the colonists, and led services each Sunday, but the colonists were not a very religious group; his services rarely had more than twenty regular attendees.¹⁶

The religious mission of Georgia was not off to an auspicious start and would, in fact, languish for most of the colonial period. For close to the first twenty years of the colony's existence, there was only one official clergyman in Georgia, based in Savannah. After 1750, there were sporadic appointments to Augusta as well, but this post frequently remained vacant. In addition, the territory which an appointee was expected to cover was impossibly large. As the colony's third Anglican minister, John Wesley confessed after six months on the job that any man would despair of it. The mass of the territory alone provided insurmountable hardships: "a parish of above two hundred miles in length

¹⁵Harold E. Davis, *The Fledgling Province: Social and Cultural Life in Colonial Georgia, 1733-1776* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1976), 233; Sarah Gober Temple and Kenneth Coleman, *Georgia Journeys, 1732-1754: Being an Account of the Lives of Georgia's Original Settlers and Many Other Early Settlers from the Founding of the Colony in 1732 until the Institution of Royal Government in 1754* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1961), 22.

¹⁶Trustee Memorial to the SPGFP, Dec. 17, 1735, *CRG*, 32:196, Edgar Legare Pennington, "John Wesley's Georgia Ministry," *Church History* 8 no. 3, (Sept. 1939), 233.

laughs at the labours of one man.” And even if the size could be diminished, the parishioners needed such attention and guidance that just those of Savannah “would give constant employment for five or six to instruct, rebuke, and exhort as need requires.” For the outpost town of Frederica, Wesley could not recommend that any person be subjected to minister there, unless he was “an experienced soldier of Jesus Christ,” one who “could rejoice in the Reproaches, persecutions, distresses for Christ’s sake.”¹⁷ Salzburger leader Johann Martin Bolzius succinctly assessed the colony’s religious state in the first decade: “In this country things still look rather bad with respect to the Kingdom of God.” He acknowledged that there were a few English colonists in Savannah “in which the Savior seems to have begun His work” but lamented that “There are very few of these, however, and even they seem to show their Christianity in external works” rather than truly submitting to God.¹⁸ Near mid-century, German pastor Johann Ulrich Driseler complained that “the European settlers were worse than the unconverted heathen.”¹⁹ Even as late as the 1770s, when Georgia’s population had risen to 33,000, only seven ministers were active in the colony. Of the twelve official Anglican parishes, ten pulpits remained empty.²⁰

¹⁷John Wesley to James Vernon, Savannah, Sept. 11, 1736, John Telford, ed., *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, Vol 1, 1721-1741 (London: Epworth Press, 1931), 228.

¹⁸Jones, “Bolzius Reports on Georgia,” 217.

¹⁹George Fenwick Jones, ed., “‘In Frederica the Oysters Grow on Trees’: A 1745 Letter from its Lutheran Pastor, Johann Ulrich Driesler,” *GHQ* 1995 79(4):887.

²⁰Davis, *Fledgling Province*, 193, 194, 204.

With religious affairs for the European colonists in such disarray throughout the colonial period, it is evident that the early missionary promise to convert the Indians might suffer and consequently remain unfulfilled. One Trustee suggested that it would necessitate at least four ministers at one time to serve the colony sufficiently: “1 at Frederica, 1 at Savannah, 1 Itinerant Missioner for the distant Settlements, & 1 to be employ’d in converting the Indians.”²¹ Unfortunately, there were not enough qualified candidates to fill four positions. The same Trustee recognized that if there was not a sufficient supply of clergyman to both serve the colonists and as missionaries to the Indians, the entire colony would suffer. He credited the missionaries’ presence among the settlers for a visible change “with respect to the increase of Industry, love and Christian charity among them.” He knew that the call to convert the natives was strong, however, and he voiced concern that the settlers could not spare their ministers without deleterious effects for the entire colony. If the clergymen should “remove to the Indians, we should be left entirely destitute,” the parishioners would suffer, and, by extension, so would the colony.²² This does not mean, however, that the opportunity for missionaries to have a strong effect on intercultural relations did not present itself; in fact, the opportunity was there, several inroads were begun, but ultimately the missionaries of Georgia could not capitalize on the opportunities nor make any successes materialize.

When Oglethorpe left Beaufort, South Carolina, on January 20, 1733 to venture to the Georgia territory and to select a location for his new settlement of Savannah, he made

²¹*EJ*, 241, March 9, 1737.

²²*EJ*, 185, July 1736.

certain he met with the local Yamacraw Indians, secured their blessings, and negotiated a treaty of friendship and alliance. The leaders of the two groups, Tomochichi and Oglethorpe, maintained an unusual bond of friendship and respect from the beginning, and Tomochichi made it clear that he hoped for religious instruction for his people. In the first few months of the colony's existence, Oglethorpe wrote to authorities in England on several occasions that leaders of the Yamacraws "desire[d] to be instructed in the Christian religion" and "to breed their Children at our Schools."²³ With the Yamacraw village within a mile of Savannah, Tomochichi frequently visited the settlement and, as the colony became established, continued to make his desire for religious instruction known. The chief "constantly" attended church services and promised to allow his nephew and heir Toonahowi to live among the Christians so that he could be educated by them. The Earl of Egmont, one of the most involved Trustees, reported that "tho the old ones say they are too old to learn," they were very "fond" of the idea that "their children should be Christians."²⁴ By summer, Oglethorpe proclaimed that he had "great hopes" that at the very least this band of Yamacraws would convert because of his relationship with Tomochichi and the chief's self-proclaimed desires to move his band in that direction.²⁵

²³Martyn, "Reasons" in Reese, *Most Delightful Country*, 183; James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, Feb. 1, 1733, *CRG*, 20:10; Letter from James Oglethorpe, Apr. 18, 1733, *CRG*, 3:380.

²⁴*EJ*, 216, Dec. 1, 1736.

²⁵James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, Mar. 12, 1733, in *OG*, 1:7; James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, May 14, 1733, *CRG*, 20:20.

Oglethorpe firmly believed that success in converting the Indians was possible; in fact, he believed that the only problem that needed to be addressed was the language barrier: “there is nothing wanting to the conversion, but one who understands their language well, to explain to them the mysterie of religion.” They were desirous of such instruction and had the rudimentary understandings of morality, a higher being, and a strong governing force already in place. Oglethorpe argued that “as to the moral part of Christianity, they understand it, and do assent to it,” claiming that theft was non-existent among the Creeks and that they “abhor adultery.” He conceded that drunkenness and the concept of revenge, or “blood law,” were the “two greatest obstacles to their being truly Christians,” but that “upon both these points they hear reason.” Intoxication could easily be curtailed, and the only actions that necessitated revenge in the absence of an “executive power of justice” were adultery and murder.²⁶ The Earl of Egmont believed that the Indians had “a great notion of God and a Providence” and witnessed first-hand that native youth were teachable. During the Yamacraws’ visit to England in 1734, Toonahowi and his brother met with the Trustees, and Egmont especially was much impressed: he “is learning and much brought off of the habit of drinking which our English had taught him. That he understands & Speaks English So well as in Mr. Oglethorpe’s opinion to be the best Interpreter we have.”²⁷ When the native youth met

²⁶[James Oglethorpe], “Curious Account of the Indians by an Honorable Person” in *A New Voyage to Georgia; by a Young Gentleman; giving an Account of his Travels to South Carolina and part of North Carolina; to which is added, a Curious Account of the Indians by an honourable person; and a poem to James Oglethorpe, esq on his arrival from Georgia* (London: Printed for J. Wilford, 1735), 57.

²⁷*EJ*, 216, Dec.1, 1736.

with the queen, he spoke to her in English and was “forward in his learning” of reading, writing, and the basic tenets of Christianity.²⁸

Another element in favor of the conversion effort was the amicable relationship built up between Oglethorpe and the natives. In addition to forming an especially close bond with Tomochichi, Oglethorpe generally impressed most of the Indians with whom he had contact. In 1734, an anonymous townsman in Savannah wished to will his property to the benefit of missionary work among the Indians. He was certain the effort would move forward for a variety of reasons, the least of which were the Christian values exemplified by Oglethorpe himself and the relationship he had successfully enjoyed with the natives. Because of the “strict justice and good usage” exhibited by Oglethorpe towards the Indians, admittedly unusual behavior for a colonial leader the author claimed that “Oglethorpe has so endear’d them to him that they are ready to hear and receive any thing he shall propose.”²⁹ Certainly he overestimated Oglethorpe’s influence, but the point is not lost: the relationship between Oglethorpe and Tomochichi, indeed the general’s relationship with the natives in general, allowed the Indians to be more open to European ways.

The Englishmen who were reporting the Indians’ desires certainly stood to gain by exhorting the missionary cause, and it is likely they would exaggerate the Indians’ willingness, at least subconsciously. Anyone tied to the colony understood that producing native converts would only increase the perception of the colony’s success. It

²⁸*EJ*, 61, Aug. 14, 1734.

²⁹Anonymous Letter to Lord Percival, Earl of Egmont, Apr. 6, 1734, *CRG*, 20:54.

would mean continued or increased financial support, prove that Oglethorpe was a worthy leader, and provide another means to validate the colony's existence. It would encourage the pursuit of Oglethorpe's philanthropic activities – a refuge for the honest, hard-working poor, relief for persecuted religious sects, and missionary work among the natives – as well as assert that Indians and colonists could successfully work and live together. It would appease leaders back in England – clergymen, the Trustees, even the monarchy – and create a stronger bond of alliance and friendship between the Georgia colonists and the local natives.

But the Indians were looking for allies and friendship among the new settlers as well, and this was especially true of the Yamacraws and Chief Tomochichi. Although considered by both the Creeks and himself to be part of the Lower Creek confederacy, Tomochichi and his band of about two hundred individuals were a disconnected group. They had broken away from the larger Creek confederacy in the 1720s and had lived near but separate from the Lower Towns for the past few years. While Oglethorpe needed an Indian ally in this new land, Tomochichi needed an English ally as well, not only for the benefit of the alliance itself, but also as a means to increase his standing among the Creeks. By serving as a liaison between the Creeks and the English, his stature within the native community would increase significantly.

Tomochichi consequently took advantage of the position in which he found himself in 1733. He relinquished possession of certain lands, allowed Oglethorpe to create his settlement of Savannah, and became a close friend and ally. His desire for friendship was sincere, but it was also politically savvy for him to forge such alliances.

As a subset of those political maneuverings, it also made sense for Tomochichi to campaign for conversion and education. What his idea of conversion meant remains debatable. Did he intend for his people to become true converts and shun their original cultural beliefs? Or, like many natives, did he anticipate that they would incorporate European religion with their own? Regardless, he understood the important alliances that religion could cement and the importance of a Christian education in increasing his people's survival skills in a new world in which European Christians more and more often played a vital role. The knowledge that Europeans could provide the natives gave Christian instruction its pragmatic appeal. It was not just conversion per se, but the education that went along with it that was useful and most intriguing to Tomochichi.

Tomochichi made it clear to Oglethorpe from the beginning that he was interested in Christian education for his people, but he had the opportunity to make his appeal to the religious and political leaders in London himself when he traveled there in 1734. On August 18, the Yamacraw representatives met with the Archbishop of Canterbury. Although their beliefs did not allow them to tell him much of their own spiritual convictions, Tomochichi was apparently "so taken" with the Archbishop that upon parting, the headman commented that "he now really believed that some good man would be sent to instruct them and their children."³⁰

When the Trustees met with Tomochichi less than two weeks later, "he required two things in behalf of himself and people." One dealt with conditions of trade, the other was a firm request that "we would make their youths Christians." Tomochichi suggested

³⁰*Gentleman's Magazine*, 4:450, Aug. 1734; *EJ*, 61, Aug. 14, 1734.

that this end might be best accomplished by sending over a youth to instruct Toonahowi, then around age fifteen, “whose example would be follow’d by their own youth.”³¹ After an evening of food and entertainment with the Earl of Egmont and his family, the chief took another opportunity to remind the Trustee of the Yamacraws’ educational agenda. As he departed, he told him that “he hoped we would take care to make their children Christians,” affirmed his friendship, and hoped “that God above would continue it.”³²

Not unreasonably, Oglethorpe boasted that there “seems to be a door opened to our colony towards the conversion of the Indians.”³³ But that door was open only because of reasons apparent to a politically savvy chief with his own agenda, looking to ensure the best possible future for his people, hoping to strengthen alliances and standings, and looking for imported knowledge as a weapon in his diplomatic arsenal. Creating a bond through religious education was the politically shrewd thing to do, not a wholesale abandonment of native values. When Tomochichi, back in Georgia, finally met with an Anglican clergyman who offered the possibility of instructing his people, he remained cagey, playing up his mediating skills but refusing to make any promises. He politely expressed his happiness with the minister’s arrival in Georgia. And while he promised to “go up and speak to the wise men of our nation” on behalf of the minister and his conversion cause, he would make no promises, only saying vaguely “and I hope they will hear.” He did make it very clear that conversion would be on the Indians’ terms, only

³¹*EJ*, 62, Aug. 28, 1734.

³²*EJ*, 62, Aug. 14, 1734.

³³[Oglethorpe], *New Voyage*, 57.

agreed to after they had been educated in the Christian ways. He did not want to see a repeat of the Spanish mission system, a process by which he believed the Catholics converted without teaching and the Indians consequently gained little. If the Yamacraws were to become Christians, they “would be taught first and then be baptized.”³⁴

Although the local natives were curious about the colonists’ religion and Tomochichi was eager for his band to be educated in Christian ways, neither of the first two Anglican ministers in Georgia capitalized on the situation. Neither Herbert nor Quincy had much interaction with the natives, nor did they have much interest, given the opportunities present. Both clergymen had certainly met Tomochichi since he attended the first “Divine Service” held in Georgia and consistently attended church services thereafter.³⁵ In addition, given the proximity of the Yamacraw village to Savannah and the constant interaction of the Indians and the settlers, the ministers likely had consistent interaction with other natives as well, as did all of the townspeople. For the first few years, however, no one responded to Tomochichi’s request. The opportunities went unfulfilled until 1736. In that year, a ship of new immigrants arrived, including a contingent of refugee Moravians and three Anglicans specifically interested in working among the Indians: brothers John and Charles Wesley and their associate Benjamin Ingham.

If intentions could count as victories, John Wesley by all rights should have had the most success in converting the Georgia natives. He determined to go to Georgia for

³⁴*EJ*, 132, Feb. 14, 1735.

³⁵*JPG*, 37.

that sole reason, even if his motivations were selfish. He frankly admitted that his “chief motive, to which all the rest are subordinate, is the hope of saving my own soul. I hope to learn the true sense of the gospel of Christ by preaching it to the heathen.”³⁶ But this Anglican missionary, who initially had the most interest and determination to work with the Indians, ultimately did surprisingly little with them. The Trustees, who were looking for a replacement for Quincy, asked the SPG to accept Wesley as their recommendation. His brother Charles secured the position of Secretary of Indian Affairs, and, after much cajoling, the two convinced their Oxford schoolmate Benjamin Ingham to join them in their cause. They embarked in November 1735 on the same ship carrying a group of Moravians immigrants, with whom the three Anglicans forged a close relationship.³⁷ They arrived in Savannah in February 1736.

Before the Anglican ministers had a chance to disembark, they had the opportunity to meet the key figures in early Georgia’s Anglo-Indian relations. Having heard that there were missionaries on board who designed to preach to the natives, Tomochichi was eager to meet them. On February 14, the Wesleys and Ingham received the Yamacraw delegation on board. Leading the way were Tomochichi and Mary

³⁶John Wesley to Dr. Burton, Oct. 10, 1735, Telford, *Letters of Wesley*, 188.

³⁷Trustee Memorial to the SPGFP to assign £50 a year to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley as missionary in Savannah, *CRG*, 32:196, Dec. 17, 1735; *CRG*, 2:123, Sept. 24, 1735; *EJ*, 107, Sept. 17, 1735; *CRG*, 32:173; For Ingham’s hesitation but subsequent reasons for going, see Benjamin Ingham to his Mother, Savannah, May 1, 1736, Luke Tyerman, ed., *The Oxford Methodists: Memoirs of the Rev. Messrs. Clayton, Ingham, Gambold, Hervey, and Broughton, with Biographical Notices of Others* (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1873), 64-66; Margaret Szasz, *Indian Education in the American Colonies, 1607-1783* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), 153.

Musgrove, who served as interpreter. Also accompanying them were the chief's nephew Toonahowi, his wife Senauky, and six other men, women, and children of the nation. The meeting had a friendly talk, but both sides were cautious with their promises. For his part, Tomochichi and his family welcomed the missionaries, presenting symbolic gifts of milk and honey. The chief was pleased that they had arrived and reiterated his desire to have someone "speak the Great Word to me." At the same time, he diplomatically warned them that they may have taken too long, suggesting that in 1734, when he first began asking for an instructor, "my nation then desired to hear it." Two years later, however, the Indians had "been all put into confusion" by the presence and instigation of the French, the Spanish, and the British traders among them. All these people, according to Tomochichi, "put us into confusion and set our people against hearing the great word." But he did promise that he would "assemble the great men of our nation" to seek approval for Wesley to preach to them.³⁸

While Tomochichi was being cautiously optimistic about the possibility of Wesley teaching Christian principles to the Indians, Wesley replied with an equally vague answer, which most likely disconcerted the Indian chief. The minister asserted that "there is but one, He that sitteth in heaven, who is able to teach man wisdom . . . We know not whether He will please to teach you by us or no."³⁹ From Wesley's perspective, he was simply reporting the truth of the matter, offering the same cautious objective that the chief had shown. From Tomochichi's view, however, the statement at

³⁸*JJW*, 159-160, Feb. 14, 1736.

³⁹*JJW*, 161, Feb. 14, 1736.

best was no ringing endorsement of the ministers' skills and at worse was a mild rebuff. The relationship between the minister and his pupil was not off to a good start.

This initial meeting, however, at least served to introduce Wesley to Tomochichi and Mary Musgrove. During his time in Georgia, Wesley frequently visited with Mary, relying on her as a vast source of important information, and occasionally used her services as interpreter.⁴⁰ He even resided at her place for a few weeks shortly after his arrival in the colony.⁴¹ But he rarely connected with Tomochichi, he did little to learn any of the Indian languages, and he settled into his ministerial duties to the Savannah colonists to the detriment of his work among the natives. He rationalized his change in focus by stating in his journal "Not finding as yet any door open for the pursuing of our main design, we considered in what manner we might be most useful to the little flock at Savannah."⁴² Most references to the Indians in Wesley's journal for the next two months only mention them as an inconvenience, an explanation as to why his prayer services for the town were interrupted or whose arrival "deprived us of our place of public worship." He did occasionally have "a religious talk" with Tomochichi or other Yamacraws, but he does not record the specifics or spend any time reflecting on these talks in his writings.⁴³

⁴⁰See, for example, *JJW*, 166, Feb. 19, 1736; 304, Dec. 22, 1736; 307, Dec. 28, 1736; 313, Jan. 31, 1737.

⁴¹James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, Feb. 27, 1736, in *OG*, 1:240.

⁴²*WJW*, 18:157, Apr. 17, 1736.

⁴³See, for example, *JJW*, 236, June 27, 1736; *WJW*, 18:397d, June 27, 1736; *WJW*, 18:398d, June 29, 1736. At this time the courthouse in Savannah doubled as a conference hall and place of worship, so whenever the Indians held a meeting with the magistrates, the town's religious services were put on hold.

Despite his earlier determination, it seemed that Wesley was not actively interested in working among the Indians, at least not those within the immediate vicinity of Savannah. His associate Ingham was working among the Yamacraws, and maybe he believed that Ingham's presence among the small band was adequately answering the call for the time being. Perhaps Wesley hoped for a grander influence among a larger tribe such as the Cherokees or the Chickasaws. His interest in a young woman he met shortly after his arrival may have also made him less inclined to travel among the Indians. His parishioners in Savannah and, less frequently, Frederica, certainly took up much of his time as well. Wesley offered adequate religious guidance to the Georgia colonists during his two years there, but he did little to fulfill his original purpose among the natives.

Wesley had virtually no interaction with those Indians closest to him, but he must have remained interested in the larger Indian tribes since he took the opportunity to meet with them when they came in town. He was especially interested in questioning them about their religious values and beliefs. The first such opportunity presented itself in July 1736, when the Creek headmen came to Savannah to treat with Oglethorpe. Wesley was present at both the official meeting and the dinner Oglethorpe hosted for them later in the week. He took the latter opportunity to speak with Chegelli, Emperor Brims' brother and successor, about his understanding of his religious destiny. Chegelli replied that only "He that is above knows what He made us for. We know nothing." Wesley responded that "if red men learn[ed] the good book, they may know as much as white men." The chief agreed but thought that "He that is above does not send us the good book" because

the Indians practiced abortion and infanticide, even though they knew it to be wrong.⁴⁴ Wesley was clearly interested not only in finding out about the Creeks' religious beliefs, but also whether they would be receptive to missionaries bringing "the good book" among them. Chegelli's answer seemed to imply that they were not seeking instruction, and Wesley showed no interest in going among them.

Later that same month, however, a conversation with a group of Chickasaws piqued Wesley's interest dramatically, and he believed them to be good candidates to whom he could dedicate himself. The Chickasaw headmen told him a little of their beliefs, superficially answering questions about their creation myth, their belief in a higher power who protects them, and life after death. Wesley again informed the Indians of a book that "tells us many things of the beloved ones above" and questioned if they would be interested in learning more. The chiefs politely responded that they were presently surrounded by enemies and had "no time now but to fight." Should they ever be at peace, however, they would welcome the instruction.⁴⁵

This brief conversation convinced Wesley that the Chickasaws were excellent candidates for missionary activity. According to him, they were not only "humble and teachable," unlike so many other Indian nations, but they also "have so firm a reliance on Providence, so settled a habit of looking up to a superiour Being in all the occurrences of life, that they appear the most likely of all the Americans to receive and rejoice in the

⁴⁴*JW*, 239, July 1, 1736.

⁴⁵*JW*, 248, July 20, 1736; *EJ*, 176, July 10, 1736.

glorious gospel of Christ.” Wesley therefore hoped to learn their language while Ingham continued to work on mastering Creek.⁴⁶

In the same letter that announced his intentions to focus on the Chickasaw language, Wesley foreshadowed a time when he would leave the Savannah flock to go among the Indians by wondering what the townspeople would do without him to guide them. Clearly, his intentions that autumn still leaned in favor of missionizing to the Indians. Any time he mentioned carrying through with this plan, however, Oglethorpe would not permit it, stating that Wesley’s ministerial obligations lay with the colonists.

Because Wesley’s salary was being paid by the SPG, he was subject to the rules that governed all of the society’s ministers. Theoretically, Wesley was paid to be in Georgia as a minister to both the colonists and the Indians. But the practical application often differed from the society’s intent.⁴⁷ The Trustees were aware of Wesley’s desire and intention to preach to the Indians, yet they desperately needed him to fill the vacancy left by Samuel Quincy as minister to Savannah. In fact, there was such a need for pious ministers in the colony, it was never really clear what position John Wesley should fill. The Trustees were first notified in September 1735 that the two Wesley brothers wished to go to Georgia “out of a pious design to convert the Indians.” Oglethorpe consequently appointed Charles as Secretary of Indian Affairs.⁴⁸ In October, the Trustees changed and/or added to the plan: Charles “is to be the minister at Savannah whilst his elder

⁴⁶John Wesley to James Vernon, Sept. 11, 1736, Telford, *The Letters of Wesley*, 228; *EJ*, 200, Sept. 11, 1736.

⁴⁷Szasz, *Indian Education*, 155-156.

⁴⁸*EJ*, 107, Sept. 17, 1735; *CRG*, 32:173.

brother endeavours to convert the Indians.”⁴⁹ In the meantime, the creation of the new outpost town of Frederica in 1736 meant that a minister was desperately needed there as well, and the official plan changed again to have John Wesley authorized “to perform all religious and ecclesiastical offices in the said new town.”⁵⁰

All of this shifting occurred while the brothers were en route to Georgia, and upon their arrival, things played out a little differently. John took over the duties in Savannah, while Charles took up the ministerial position at Frederica. The younger brother had serious difficulties ministering to the frontier inhabitants, and his duties as Secretary of Indian Affairs rarely afforded him the chance to interact with the natives. Most often, he served as clerk to Oglethorpe, and on occasion met with Indian traders to renew their licenses.⁵¹ He wanted to resign in May, but held out until July at which time he returned to England.⁵²

John had been saddled with the responsibilities of the Savannah township, but once Charles returned to England, he had to provide for the Frederica colonists as well. As a result, Wesley’s hopes of going among the Indians had to be shelved. In June 1736, when the minister “hoped a door was opened for going up immediately to the Choctaws,”

⁴⁹*EJ*, 114, Oct. 7, 1735.

⁵⁰*CRG*, 1:234.

⁵¹See, for example, Thomas Jackson, ed., *The Journal of the Rev. Charles Wesley, M.A., sometime student of Christ Church, Oxford* [microform] (London : Wesleyan Methodist Book-Room, 1849), May 11, 1736 and July 1, 1736.

⁵²Jackson, *Journal of Charles Wesley*, July 25, 1736; Pennington, “Georgia Ministry,” 240. He resigned his Secretaryship on this day and left shortly thereafter for England.

Oglethorpe quickly objected. The travel would be too dangerous, running the risk of being taken or killed by the French, but above all, he was worried about “leaving Savannah destitute of a minister.”⁵³ Two months later, Oglethorpe raved about the good Wesley was accomplishing among the colonists, but anticipated that if Wesley fulfilled his hopes and moved to live among the Indians, then the Georgia colonists would “be left entirely destitute, and the People by a relapse, if possible worse than before.”⁵⁴ As winter approached, Wesley complained that the Anglicans had “less prospect of preaching to the Indians than we had the first day we set foot in America.” The issue came to a head in November, when Oglethorpe and Wesley had a heated debate regarding where the minister’s obligations lay. Oglethorpe argued that he could not leave Savannah without a minister and that he had an obligation to fulfill the appointment there, while Wesley reasoned that he had agreed to serve in that capacity only “till a door is opened to the heathens.” He declared “I never promised to stay here one month.”

Ultimately, however, Wesley admitted he could not turn away from his flock in Savannah. He justified his decision by rationalizing that he could stay in town because “the time was not come to preach the gospel of peace to the heathens.”⁵⁵ This may have been a convenient excuse, but Wesley did have strong intentions to preach to the Indians before he arrived in Georgia, and while he was in the colony he certainly argued for it frequently. In addition to his conversations with Oglethorpe, he told a young lady with

⁵³*JJW*, 238, June 30, 1736.

⁵⁴James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, Summer 1736, *CRG*, 21:198.

⁵⁵*JJW*, 297-298, Nov. 23, 1736.

whom he was in love that he should not marry, for it would “probably obstruct the design of my coming into America, the going among the Indians.” At another time, he told her that if he married at all, he was resolved “not to do it till I have been among the Indians.”⁵⁶ In addition, he kept an active interest in the Indian tribes, especially the Chickasaws, and as late as July 1737, he was still purposefully meeting with people who could supply him with information regarding the natives’ diplomatic relations and their desire to be Christianized. But his hopes of preaching to the Indians never materialized, and his frustration seems genuine when, years later, he reflected that “All the time I was at Savannah I was there beating the air.”⁵⁷

John Wesley’s sojourn in Georgia came to an end in December 1737. He had come to America with strong intentions of converting the “heathens,” but during his time in the colony, he had not learned their language, had little interaction with them, and had preached to virtually none. While there were other factors involved in his departure, Wesley blamed his inability to work among the Indians as a primary cause.⁵⁸ In October, he wrote that “the reason for which I left [England] now had no force, there being no possibility as yet of instructing the Indians; neither had I, as yet, found or heard of any

⁵⁶*JJW*, 317, Feb. 8, 1737, 318, Feb. 14, 1737. Charles Delamotte also testified that Wesley “had declared to Miss Hopkey on all occasions, that he would never lay aside his design of going among the Indians.” See Deposition of Delamotte, Oct. 25, 1737, *WJW*, 18:552.

⁵⁷*Gentleman’s Magazine*, 7:318, May 1737; *JJW*, 367, July 9, 1737; Quoted in Cashin, *Bethesda*, 3.

⁵⁸Most noticeably, his relationship with Sophia Hopkey, the disgruntled parishioners, and the subsequent court case. See Pennington, “John Wesley’s Georgia Ministry,” esp. 243-53.

Indians on the continent of America who had the least desire of being instructed.”⁵⁹

Bitterly disappointed, John Wesley penned his final assessment of the natives – “they show no inclination to learn anything, least of all, Christianity” – and left Georgia on December 7, 1737.⁶⁰

Despite their best intentions, the Wesley brothers did virtually nothing to bring Christianity to the Indians of Georgia or to promote an atmosphere useful for cultural exchange. But the same ship that brought them to Georgia in 1736 also carried other people interested in converting the natives – the Moravians and Benjamin Ingham. Among those people, Tomochichi would finally have an answer to his desire for religious education. The most concerted and successful effort to Christianize and educate the Georgia Indians in the colonial period thus stemmed from religious refugees and a young Oxford scholar who had joined the expedition at the last minute.

* * * * *

The Moravians were a persecuted Protestant sect, originally from a corner of the present-day Czech Republic. They had taken refuge in Germany under the guidance of Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf beginning in 1722, and the count hoped to secure them additional places of refuge in the new world. As a sect intent on missionizing, the opportunity to work among the Indians was another crucial element in their decision to migrate to America.⁶¹

⁵⁹*WJW*, 18:193, Oct. 7, 1737.

⁶⁰*JW*, 400-01, Dec. 2, 1737.

⁶¹Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 147; Jones and Peucher, “Pure Intentions,” 85.

From the earliest negotiations between Zinzendorf and the Trustees, it is clear that missionizing was a primary concern. Zinzendorf made sure that “those among his colonists who wish to preach the gospel to the heathen shall be allowed to do so.” Anticipating success among the Indians, he also requested that their “converts shall have the same religious freedom as his colonists.”⁶² Furthermore, he was well-educated on the conceivability of his plan, having done his research and confident that his design to convert the Indians would succeed. When doubters questioned him, the count responded that “the heathen whom [we] wish to reach by this new settlement are the Creek and Cherokee Indians with whom Governor Oglethorpe has already established pleasant relations, bringing in several of their chiefs to England, and sending them home filled with much admiration for all they had seen, much impressed by the kindness shown them, and willing to meet any efforts that might be made to teach them.”⁶³ Zinzendorf was perhaps overly optimistic, but he was aware that the groundwork had been laid and that some Indians desired further instruction.

When Oglethorpe corresponded with the count in February, 1735, the colony’s founder acknowledged that “as ministers...you were called by the Indian people,” a fact which pleased Oglethorpe since he hoped to move forward with converting the Indians.⁶⁴ The Trustees chose for the Moravians a five-hundred-acre tract of land on the Ogeechee

⁶²Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 32.

⁶³Quoted in Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 45.

⁶⁴George Fenwick Jones, ed., “Bringing the Moravians to Georgia: Three Latin Letters from James Oglethorpe to Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf.” *GHQ* 1996 80(4):850, Feb. 19, 1735.

River, near Fort Argyle, and, at the Moravians' request, located in close proximity to the Indians.⁶⁵ Count Zinzendorf's instructions to his immigrating Moravians make their intentions clear: "Your one aim will be to establish a little place near the heathen where you may gather together the dispersed in Israel, patiently win back the wayward, and instruct the heathen tribes."⁶⁶ Furthermore, if any of his small band was to act outside of the prescriptions of the brethren community, the transgressor would have to leave the colony, for "we would not willingly permit such a man to remain in the land as an offence to the Indians."⁶⁷

In early 1735, Zinzendorf sent a group of ten Moravians, including their leader Bishop August Gottlieb Spangenberg, to Georgia. In addition to the five-hundred-acre tract for Zinzendorf, the Moravians received two fifty-acre lots for their bishops – Spangenberg and David Nitschmann. Each of the smaller lots were divided into three parcels: a town lot in Savannah, a five-acre garden, and a forty-five acre farm.⁶⁸ Each Moravian family would also receive an additional fifty-acre lot "so that in this way your people who are coming and going to Savannah may be able to associate only with their own brethren until everything has been made ready for those going to [Zinzendorf's tract

⁶⁵Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 73, 94. The Yamacraws and Creeks were located relatively close to Ebenezer, but the Yuchi Indians were the closest, occupying land immediately adjoining the Salzburgers' land grant.

⁶⁶Quoted in Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 71.

⁶⁷Quoted in Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 137.

⁶⁸Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 51-52.

on the] Ogeechee.”⁶⁹ On the Savannah holdings, the Moravians could establish themselves in Georgia, get their bearings, and begin the tasks necessary to sustain their communal lifestyle.

To that end, the Moravians became very productive in town immediately upon their arrival in April 1735. The bishops’ two town lots were assigned, side by side, both of the garden lots were put under immediate cultivation, and within just about a week, one of the town lots had a twenty-by-ten-foot cabin with fourteen foot high ceilings and a loft. Many of their English neighbors marveled at the Moravians’ productivity and exclaimed that “the Moravians had done more in one week than their [own] people in two years.”⁷⁰

But the Moravians were eager to get their separate community under way outside of Savannah, not only to more easily exercise their communal lifestyle away from other colonists, but also so they could better pursue their primary goal: the conversion of the Indians. Zinzendorf’s tract was relatively close to Savannah and also located in proximity to other religious settlements such as that of the Salzburgers.⁷¹ For a variety of reasons, however, the Moravians were repeatedly delayed in making the journey to the chosen tract in order to survey the land. On at least one occasion the threat of hostile Spanish Indians kept them from traveling abroad; on another, Spangenberg and

⁶⁹Jones, “Three Latin Letters,” 858.

⁷⁰Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 67-69; quote on page 69.

⁷¹Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 75, 94; Jones and Peucher, “Pure Intentions,” 109-110.

magistrate Thomas Causton “had made a day’s journey [when] something intervened so that we could go no further.”⁷²

The acreage was finally surveyed on August 29, 1735, but the Moravians never moved to the more remote territory.⁷³ Perhaps they believed they had made sufficient improvements to the lots in Savannah and that these were suiting their purposes well enough. As for engaging the Indians, they recognized, surprisingly perhaps, that there was plenty of opportunity to do so in and around town. Spangenberg was excited to report back to Zinzendorf that “we consider it the greatest blessing of God that we have first come to Savannah, for this is an opportunity for us to get together with the heathens, for they live near Savannah and come here every day.”⁷⁴ By the time the land was surveyed in August, the Moravians, therefore, were probably not only well established in town, but also deeply involved with the local Indians. They thus did not need nor want to relocate.

From the day of the Moravians’ arrival, one of the colony’s magistrate, Thomas Causton, had helped them settle in Savannah and opened important doors to the native world for them. He had collected a large number of Indian words and phrases and promised to share them with Spangenberg. He also introduced the Moravian leader to two, perhaps, three, of the most important native people. In one afternoon, after having arrived in Georgia just a few days earlier, Spangenberg met with Tomochichi, the

⁷²Jones and Peucher, “Pure Intentions,” 93, 109.

⁷³Jones, “Three Latin Letters,” 853.

⁷⁴Jones and Peucher, “Pure Intentions,” 108.

Yamacraw chief, and Johnny Musgrove, the Indian trader. He also made mention of Mary Musgrove, and although he had good things to say about her, it is unclear whether he met her in person at this early date.⁷⁵ Regardless, it did not take long for the Moravians to become actively involved with the local natives.

After their initial meeting in town, Spangenberg and the other Moravians felt comfortable traveling to see Tomochichi in the Yamacraw village.⁷⁶ But more often than not, the Indians came to visit them. On July 11, 1735, Spangenberg sat down to compose a letter which provided an unusual glimpse into everyday life in Savannah. “While I am writing an honest old Indian is sitting by me. He has already been sitting by me for two hours very quietly watching me write.” Nor was this lone Indian a rare sight; according to the Moravian bishop, “In addition to him there have been at least twelve Indians here this morning.” This was a common occurrence, as he noted “they have visited us almost every day and often eaten with us and very often attended our prayer meeting very quietly.”⁷⁷ Clearly, the Moravians had found the Indians with whom they hoped to interact, and certainly the local Indians had an active interest in the representatives of European religion.

For his part, Spangenberg encouraged the Indians’ visits and attempted to learn some of their language. By June 1735, he could provide a smattering of examples of the Indian lexicon – “for example, they call wood *zulli*, fire *vutta*, the sun *hessi*, the sky

⁷⁵Jones and Peucher, “Pure Intentions,” 91, 94.

⁷⁶Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 74.

⁷⁷Jones and Peucher, “Pure Intentions,” 116-117.

zoka” – and mused about his hopes for future engagement among them. He hoped to learn not only a few more words soon but “the language itself.” But in order to accomplish this, he felt strongly that he needed to live among the natives. He was not yet ready to commit to that step, knowing that “all this is done with the guidance of God. I will not just run straight ahead.”⁷⁸

Spangenberg knew, of course, that he had his own flock to tend and too many priorities to devote himself exclusively to the conversion of the natives. The Moravians’ intentions, however, were true, and eventually they initiated colonial Georgia’s most systematic and most hopeful attempt to convert and educate the nearby natives.⁷⁹ But before that could happen, the ten Moravians who arrived in 1735 would need reinforcements, and those arrived in February 1736. The ship also brought the Wesley brothers and their Oxford associate Benjamin Ingham, the latter of whom would prove instrumental in helping the Moravians carry out their plans.

Because Ingham did not have as many other professional obligations to fulfill while in Georgia, he was able to dedicate the majority of his time to the Indians. Beginning on board the ship during the voyage over and aided at times by John Wesley, he worked to “write out the English dictionary, in order to learn the Indian tongue.” All three of the Anglican missionaries frequently “spent the evening in conversation with Mr. Oglethorpe,” who was also on board, “from whom we learnt many particulars concerning

⁷⁸Jones and Peucher, “Pure Intentions,” 104.

⁷⁹Davis, *Fledgling Province*, 18.

the Indians.”⁸⁰ Almost immediately upon their arrival in Georgia, the missionaries had the opportunity to meet with Tomochichi and other representatives of the Yamacraw band. They were encouraged when the chief requested them to teach their children.⁸¹ Within a few weeks, however, Charles Wesley headed to Frederica to take up his position as minister and Secretary of Indian Affairs, and John Wesley settled into Savannah to minister to the colonists.

Throughout the spring, Ingham met often with Tomochichi, interacted with other Indians, and frequently traveled to the Musgroves’ trading post. Ingham termed Mary a “well civilized woman” and was hopeful she would “teach us the Indian tongue.”⁸² To that end, the two reached an agreement on April 26, 1736, whereby he would spend three to four days a week at her home, learning the language. In exchange, he was to teach her children how to read, “and to make her whatever recompense she would require more for her trouble.”⁸³ Oglethorpe promised to build a small house in the vicinity of Musgrove’s cowpen for the use of anyone, Moravian or Anglican, who wanted to study the Indian language under Mary’s direction.⁸⁴

So that John Wesley, who was obligated to stay in Savannah much of the time, could also benefit from Mary’s teaching, Ingham was to spend the remainder of his week

⁸⁰Tyerman, *Oxford Methodists*, 73, Jan. 12, 1736; Reese, *Our First Visit*, 172; *JJW*, 134, Jan. 9, 1736.

⁸¹Tyerman, *Oxford Methodists*, 75, Feb. 14, 1736.

⁸²Tyerman, *Oxford Methodists*, 75, Feb. 14, 1736.

⁸³Tyerman, *Oxford Methodists*, 80, Apr. 25, 1736.

⁸⁴*JJW*, 168, Feb. 25, 1736.

in town, “communicating what I have learned to Mr. Wesley.” The Moravians, who had been waiting hopefully for an opportunity to learn the language, requested that Ingham teach some of their members what he learned as well, to which he readily consented.⁸⁵ Within a few months, Ingham had “made some progress” in learning the language and had compiled a significant vocabulary, with some guesstimates of the inclusion of about one half of the Creek words.⁸⁶ Although Wesley made no mention of any language lessons with Ingham in his meticulous diary, at least three Moravians – Anton Seifert, George Neisser, and John Bohner – took advantage of Ingham’s studies.⁸⁷ Beginning in July, the Moravians also sent a married couple, Peter and Catherine Rose, to live with the Yamacraws in hopes of mastering their language.⁸⁸

Ingham also secured an agreement with Tomochichi and his wife Senauky regarding the education of their nephew Toonahowi. Tomochichi had been requesting an English education for his heir since he first met Oglethorpe, and when Ingham asked them if they were willing to let the minister teach him, they agreed. This arrangement allowed Toonahowi to reside with Ingham, but the Indian couple made it clear that corporal punishment was not allowed.⁸⁹

⁸⁵Tyerman, *Oxford Methodists*, 80, Apr. 25, 1736.

⁸⁶John Wesley to James Vernon, Sept. 11, 1736, Telford, *Letters of John Wesley*, 228; McPherson, *Egmont Journal*, 200, Sept. 11, 1736; Tyerman, *Oxford Methodists*, 83.

⁸⁷Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 150.

⁸⁸Szasz, *Indian Education*, 165; Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 152.

⁸⁹Tyerman, *Oxford Methodists*, 80, April 20, 1736.

From the end of April through July, Ingham lived near the Indians, studied under Mary, and traveled to Savannah to teach the Moravians what he had learned. When Charles Wesley arrived back in England at the end of that year, he reported that Ingham had “made great proficiency” in learning the language.⁹⁰ With three months’ worth of language study behind him, Mary as a tutor, the Roses working on the Creek language as well, and Tomochichi’s blessing to continue educating Toonahowi, Ingham felt confident moving forward in his plans. He therefore proposed a joint Anglican Moravian effort to build a school among the Yamacraws. Oglethorpe once again agreed to help out the cause financially, and “out of the zeal for the work,” the Moravians agreed to provide low-cost labor to build the schoolhouse.⁹¹ They selected a site about a mile from the Musgroves’ Cowpen and “within a Furlong” of the Yamacraw village; construction began in mid-August.⁹²

The building consisted of three rooms, a thirty-by-fifteen foot school room in the middle flanked on either side by two fifteen-square-foot rooms, one for the use of Ingham, the other for the Moravians. The schoolhouse, known as Irene, was located on land claimed by the Yamacraws but not in use at the time. Recent archaeological work suggests that various people had used the acreage over the course of eight different periods, but the bones and burial objects found there by the Moravian crew in 1736 were

⁹⁰John Wesley to John Hutchings, Feb. 16, 1737, Telford, *Letters of Wesley*, 211; *EJ*, 216, Dec. 1, 1736.

⁹¹Szasz, *Indian Education*, 154, 166; Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 152; Benjamin Ingham to Sir John Phillips, Sept. 15, 1736, in *OG*, 278.

⁹²*EJ*, 308, July 20, 1737; Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 152.

not Yamacraw. Ingham recognized that the area had been purposefully constructed by humans long before he arrived, “but for what reason I can’t tell.” Ingham and the Moravians may have been ignorant of the ceremonial purpose the location had, but the significance was lost on Tomochichi’s tribe as well, and they did not object.⁹³

While the Moravians worked on the building, they lived with the Indians. They continued working on the Creek language while also beginning to teach the Indians the English alphabet.⁹⁴ Peter and Catherine Rose were to take up permanent residence in the Moravian side once the schoolhouse was completed, Benjamin Ingham in the other, and they had five acres of mostly cleared land, including a good-sized garden cleared by Peter Rose, to lessen their dependency on the Indians.⁹⁵

The building was finished by September 20, 1736 and consecrated by the Moravians on the 25th. As classes began, the children seemed to have an aptitude for learning. The daily schedule included reading from the English Bible, and a time for quiet prayer; while Catherine Rose taught the female Indian children to read, Peter Rose and Ingham taught the more advanced boys to write. Surprisingly, and as a significant break from previous colonial attempts at Indian education, also included in the daily routine were morning, afternoon, and evening hours dedicated to the study of the Creek

⁹³Benjamin Ingham to Sir John Phillips, Sept. 15, 1736, *CRG*, 21:221. For archaeological studies see Julie Anne Sweet, *Negotiating for Georgia: British-Creek Relations in the Trustee Era, 1733-1752* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2005), 204, note 26.

⁹⁴Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 153.

⁹⁵*EJ*, 308, July 20, 1737; Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 153; Szasz, *Indian Education*, 169.

language. The school was also located in such proximity to the Yamacraw village as to allow near constant contact with the children's families. This was thought to cause less resistance from the parents and to keep the children away from the corrupting English citizenry.⁹⁶ Both of these elements certainly encouraged Indian approval. Ingham reported that though the Indians were initially a little hesitant to let their children enter the school, the feeling quickly turned in favor of the educators. Oglethorpe had hoped that establishing a school in such close proximity would "give the opportunity also to reach the old men and women with the Gospel message." Ingham confirmed that not only were they now "very willing to have them [the children] taught, [but] even some of the Men seem to have a desire to learn."⁹⁷

There is no record of how many Indians were taught at Irene, but given the minimal size of Tomochichi's band plus the distance at which the school was located from other Lower Creek Towns, it is probable that number was never large. In September, Ingham felt confident that "in a little time, we Shall have a good Number of Scollars" but left no comprehensive data. Regardless of the number, Irene had at least a few strong students and served the important purpose of not only educating the Indians in Christian values but also acquainting the Europeans with Creek culture. Ingham himself bragged that he had "three boys that I think will be able to read and write their Language

⁹⁶Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 153; Sweet, *Negotiating for Georgia*, 84-85.

⁹⁷Benjamin Ingham to Sir John Phillips, Sept. 15, 1736, *CRG*, 21:222; Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 152.

as soon as I shall be able to speak it.” This was a friendly competition of who could master literacy in the *Creek* language first.⁹⁸

While in operation, Irene was a success, although a modest one. Indian parents agreed to let their children attend. The children acquired reading and writing skills in their own language and in English, learned the basic tenets of Christianity, and could recite hymns and prayers. The Anglican and Moravian missionaries themselves learned some of the Creek language and culture as well. Tomochichi was pleased and continued to “earnest[ly] promote the school.” Even major Creek leaders from the much more distant Lower Towns visited the school, voiced their approval, and added encouragement that the success of the school might be extended. Both Malatchi and Chigelli visited the school on their way to meet with Oglethorpe in Savannah. Chigelli was “well pleased” when the Indian pupils recited their lessons for him, and he said “Perhaps the time is now come when all our Children are to be taught learning.” Malatchi agreed, offering that “if he had 20 Children he would have them all taught.”⁹⁹ Since Malatchi did not have such a brood to send to school, it is likely that this comment may be more polite than sincere. However, the fact that both chiefs voiced their approval and pleasure with the school and commented on its *educational*, not its conversion, program suggests they were genuinely happy that the Creek children were receiving a European education.

The success that Irene was enjoying made what happened next all the more surprising. After five months of successfully running the school, eight months of

⁹⁸Benjamin Ingham to Sir John Phillips, Sept. 15, 1736, in *OG*, 279.

⁹⁹Benjamin Ingham to Sir John Phillips, Sept. 15, 1736, *CRG*, 21:222.

working to learn the Creek language, and over a year in Georgia, Benjamin Ingham suddenly left the colony on February 26, 1737, to return to England. The Trustees were confused and dismayed that the man “who shew’d so much zeal for converting the Indians...& who went over for that purpose” would “on a Sudden motion, none knew why, set out for England.”¹⁰⁰ Especially for one who had so sincerely worked for the establishment of the school, one who was having such success among the Indians, why would he abandon the mission? The move was indeed sudden, but purposeful, even if no one in England knew the reasoning. On February 24, Ingham and John Wesley had met and determined that Ingham should travel to England in hopes of encouraging some of their Oxford associates to return with him to Georgia and join in the cause. Rather than abandoning Irene or believing it a failure, Ingham was instead hopeful of recruiting more instructors so that he could continue to see it thrive and hopefully even expand. Indeed, as early as September 1736, Ingham had admitted that “what I wish for at present is one or more of my dear Oxford friends to come over and help me.”¹⁰¹ The Earl of Egmont also offered that Ingham had returned “to take priest’s orders,” but regardless, at the time, Ingham’s intentions were to return to Irene with more credentials and more recruits. In October, Ingham wrote his brother that he had “no other thoughts but of returning to America...My heart’s desire is that the Indians may hear the gospel. For this I pray both night and day.” The opportunity to return, however, did not immediately present itself, and Ingham kept the faith, knowing that “when the time comes, I trust the Lord will show

¹⁰⁰*EJ*, 277, June 6, 1737.

¹⁰¹*JJW*; 320, Feb. 24, 1737; *OG*, 279.

me.” In the meantime, he continued his efforts in England by working to “transcribe the Indian words as fast as I can” and continued to work on mastering the Creek language. Clearly, he still had hopes for returning to Georgia, although they would go unfulfilled.¹⁰²

So what became of the Irene school? Ingham knew he had left it in the capable hands of the Moravians, and they successfully continued to run it for a time. But for unknown reasons, the Moravian congregation called the Roses back to Savannah in the spring of 1737. Most likely, the couple was needed in Savannah because the communal society was dwindling. The recall was probably not a reflection on the work they were doing, for the brethren hoped to let them return to Irene and send others as well once they had people available.¹⁰³ In the beginning of October, Moravians Anton Seifert and John Bohner, two of the three original men who studied the Creek language with Ingham, moved back to the Yamacraw village. The Roses, who had newborn twin daughters at the time, waited until January 1738 to join them.¹⁰⁴ The school thus continued in this fashion for two years after Ingham’s departure. Bohner moved on to help the Moravian efforts among the South Carolina slaves in September 1738. Seifert’s ill health forced him to return to Savannah at the end of the year, and by January 1739, the Rose family had moved back as well.¹⁰⁵ With Tomochichi’s death in October 1739, the school program lost its greatest Indian champion. In addition, the coming war with Spain meant

¹⁰²*EJ*, 291, July 20, 1737; Tyerman, *Oxford Methodists*, 86; Letter to his brother Osset, Oct. 22, 1737, Tyerman, *Oxford Methodists*, 87.

¹⁰³Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 155.

¹⁰⁴Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 185.

¹⁰⁵Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 213-214; Szasz, *Indian Education*, 168-169.

that many of the Indians, including the students, would be leaving the Yamacraw village to join with Oglethorpe or to raid the Spanish. Toonahowi, Irene's greatest success story and the two cultures' best chance for successfully brokering relations in the coming decades, was killed in a raid against the Spanish in 1743. The Yamacraws subsequently abandoned their village and were reabsorbed into the Lower Creeks.¹⁰⁶

It is unlikely that the Moravians would have recalled the Roses or periodically neglected the school if it was thriving, so there must have been problems after Ingham's departure. Attendance was likely a common problem, both in terms of recruitment of new students and consistency of those who already attended. Having such a limited pool from which to recruit certainly undermined the school's success; the most generous estimates of Tomochichi's band are around two hundred members. Furthermore, the location was too far away from the central Creek nation for other Creek children to attend, and white children had their own schooling available in Savannah.¹⁰⁷ The number of students thus remained low. The fact that the colonists' children were schooled elsewhere also probably did not help the case of Irene; a more integrated approach could have aided not only the school's success, but the collective goal of native-colonist cooperation. Although each culture had local people who were dedicated to the success of the school and had the support of leaders such as Oglethorpe and Chigelli, in reality,

¹⁰⁶*The Pennsylvania Gazette*, Mar. 9, 1744, Vol. 7, no. 795, 3; David Corkran, *The Creek Frontier, 1540-1783* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 109; Szasz, *Indian Education*, 169.

¹⁰⁷Charles Delamotte who had come over with the Wesleys and Ingham, stayed in Savannah to instruct the colonists' children. James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, June 1736, in *OG*, 276; Pennington, "Wesley's Ministry," 240; *EJ*, 216, Dec. 1, 1736.

the support stemmed from a very narrow base. Without a much broader support system, the school could only be sustained as long as those directly involved with it remained active. With Tomochichi and Ingham both gone, and the dedication of the small group of Moravians wavering, Irene had little chance of sustaining itself into the next decade. So although the group at Irene did several things very well, most notably focusing on cooperation between the two groups and working on increasing knowledge of both European and Indian cultures and languages, ultimately the task faced “insurmountable difficulties.”¹⁰⁸ Those left behind to foster its growth had trouble even maintaining it.

In their defense, the Moravians were facing problems of their own, both internally and with the administration of Georgia. As for the latter, the Moravians’ primary source of concern was the requirement that colonists bear arms in common defense of the colony. As pacifists, the Moravians found this unacceptable. This point had been conceded to Zinzendorf during negotiations, but as war with Spain became a real possibility, the other European colonists did not appreciate the special favor shown to the Moravians. Zinzendorf had also been told that he need only supply two people for service, one for each of the two town lots, or that he could hire someone in their stead. The count had agreed to this in terms of the night watch, but not the militia. He also felt that his conscience could not allow him to hire someone else and put them in that position either. He requested a special dispensation for the Moravians from the Trustees, but they would not allow it.¹⁰⁹ The Moravians were further concerned about the terms of

¹⁰⁸Jones, “Boltzius Reports on Georgia,” 219.

¹⁰⁹Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 181-2.

their settlement, especially if they were forced to abandon the colony and their improvements for reasons of conscience. Their final concern dealt with the Moravians' ability to missionize the local Indians. They wanted licenses to be able to travel among the Indians as the English had. These concerns led to intense negotiations between the Moravian and Georgian leaders in the summer of 1737.

Concerned that the magistrates in Georgia had been expecting them to help defend Savannah, the Moravians reminded the Trustees that "they could not in good conscience fight, and if expected so to do would leave the colony."¹¹⁰ This threat was easier made than carried out, however, due to the original terms that had allowed the Moravians to settle in Georgia in the first place. If they left without cultivating the five-hundred-acre tract offered in Zinzendorf's name, they would forfeit the rights to it. Plus they needed the Trustees' permission to "quit the colony" and their approval to sell their lots and improvements.¹¹¹ To that end, Zinzendorf wrote the Trustees directly, requesting an exemption for all military service for the Moravians. If they could not allow such an exemption, then he requested permission to leave the colony. Still concerned about their conversion efforts among the Indians, he also requested that should they have to leave, they be allowed to have at least four members "remain among the Indians as missionaries."¹¹² The permission to preach to the Indians had been an issue before; as early as February of that year, Charles Wesley reported that the count "seemed resolved

¹¹⁰*EJ*, 277, June 8, 1737.

¹¹¹*EJ*, 291-2, July 20, 1737.

¹¹²Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 186.

to carry his people from Georgia if they might not be permitted to preach to the Indians.”¹¹³ The Trustees did not want to set a precedent of colonists selling off their effects and leaving the colony, fearing that “the colony might be in part deserted.”¹¹⁴ A tacit compromise was thus made. The Trustees stood by their rule of compulsory military service for the colonists. If the Moravians could not abide by that rule, the Trustees gave their consent for the Moravians to leave the colony. If they left, none of their party could remain behind as missionaries, for that would “be a reflection on our Country, as if there was not a sufficient number of good men fit to preach the Gospel of Christ.” Of course, in Georgia’s case, there did seem to be a dearth of qualified Englishmen willing to take up the mantle, but the Trustees made it clear that the glory would go to legitimate Georgia citizens: as long as “your People continue inhabitants there, the Trustees will rejoice at any success among the Indians which their Labours may be attended with.”¹¹⁵

If the Moravians agreed to stay and defend the colony if need be, they were offered lenient terms on their other two concerns: settlement terms and access to the Indians. The Moravians were offered a two-year extension on the time in which they could hold off cultivating their large tract without risking any forfeitures. If they so chose, they could begin cultivation at any time. In addition, they could visit the Yamacraws whenever they wanted, but in times of war, they could not go to other tribes.

¹¹³Jackson, *Journal of Charles Wesley*, Feb. 2, 1737.

¹¹⁴*EJ*, 292, July 20, 1737.

¹¹⁵Benjamin Martyn to Count Zinzendorf, Sept. 23, 1737, *CRG*, 29:232.

During times of peace, however, the Moravians would be licensed as Indian missionaries “on the same footing as the English ministers.”¹¹⁶

Early in 1738, Oglethorpe told the Trustees that the count was “very well Satisfied” with the previous year’s negotiations and that the Moravians would remain in Georgia.¹¹⁷ At the same time, however, Zinzendorf also decided not to send any additional colonists to Savannah. This certainly affected the Moravian congregation in Georgia more than it did the Trustees, for they had hoped for reinforcements for both their community and for their work among the Indians. Zinzendorf, however, believed that they could find missionaries easily from among the number already present in Georgia, and plans were in the works for further Moravian settlements in other North American colonies, necessitating that further recruits go there.¹¹⁸

But it was not just the decisions of the Georgia or Moravian administrators that led to disappointment; the Moravian congregations in Savannah seemed to have internal problems as well. They displayed a lack of the cooperation needed to sustain a communal society, and even some of the religious ceremonies had suffered. When John Bohler arrived in October 1738, the Moravian community had not celebrated Communion in over a year. This was due in part to Seifert’s absence while living among

¹¹⁶Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 160.

¹¹⁷*EJ*, 336, March 8, 1738.

¹¹⁸Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 181.

the Yamacraws, but that endeavor, too, was suffering.¹¹⁹ And with no obvious opening to go to other tribes further afoot, the community seemed to have lost its purpose.

The year 1739 was a time of decline for the Moravians in Georgia. The outbreak of Queen Anne's War revived the debate over their military service in the colony, the Irene schoolhouse was finally abandoned for good, and the group made plans to leave Georgia. The Rose family headed to Pennsylvania shortly after leaving Irene in January. John Toltschig, a friend to Ingham and financial manager for the Moravians, returned to England in November. He, at least, hoped to go back to Georgia, convinced that the Moravians could create a great community there if they took advantage of their separate acreage granted to Zinzendorf and worked among the larger Indian tribes. Despite being willing to head immediately to Georgia, the church elders decided his work would be more fruitful if he stayed in England. Two of the three Moravians with whom Ingham had shared Mary Musgrove's Creek language expertise stayed until 1740, but they, along with the remaining Moravians, migrated to Pennsylvania in the spring of that year.¹²⁰

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With the Moravians gone and the Anglican missionaries failing miserably, there was only one other religious group present in colonial Georgia who had a chance of establishing a cooperative coexistence with the natives. This was the Salzburgers,

¹¹⁹Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 213.

¹²⁰Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 198, 214; John Bohner left on Jan 20, Anton Seifert followed in the last group on April 13, 1740. George Neisser, the remaining student of Ingham's Creek language sessions, had left with Ingham on Feb 9, 1737. See Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 168, 216.

another German-speaking Protestant sect who sought refuge in Oglethorpe's colony, benefitting from the support of the Trustees and the SPG.¹²¹ Like the Moravians, they were zealous missionaries and intended to work among the Georgia Indians. Led by pastors Johann Martin Boltzius and Israel Gronau, the Salzburger established the town of Ebenezer in 1734.

In Georgia, the Salzburger enjoyed a few advantages that the Moravians did not. Primarily, they were able to prosper under stable leadership; their senior pastor, Boltzius, led his congregation for over three decades, from their first arrival until his death in 1765. They also had a larger congregation, numbering around three hundred in the early years, which allowed them to sustain their community independently. The town of Ebenezer, about twenty-five miles northwest of Savannah, had its share of hardships, but the Salzburger were able to build a self-sufficient community which thrived through the American Revolution. Their strong presence throughout the colonial period was another advantage because they could influence Georgia's direction over time.

The Salzburger immediately showed a strong interest in the local Indians, traveling to meet Tomochichi's band just two days after they arrived in Savannah. It is unknown if the person who took them there also served as an interpreter and helped the two groups communicate, but the Salzburger felt sorry for the natives and hoped they could help improve their state.¹²² The Indians deserved pity, according to the

¹²¹Jones, "Three Latin Letters," 856. The Trustees paid for the passage to Georgia and land in the colony; the Society provided food and money.

¹²²*DRS*, 1:60, March 14, 1734.

Salzburgers, “because they know nothing of the great love of God.” The natives were a people “without the means of grace,” but the Salzburgers recognized that the Christians did not acquire the means of salvation “because we are by birthright or nature better than the Indians.” God had been merciful to enlighten them, and now it was their turn to enlighten others.¹²³

The community at Ebenezer desperately wanted to aid in the conversion of the natives, hoping they could “contribute something to their salvation in a material way.”¹²⁴ The Indians frequently stopped by their homes, and this occasioned the senior minister to muse that “there is nothing we would like more than to render them spiritual help.” When the Indians visited in town, the Salzburgers tried to “show them every possible love,” but they wished instead that they “could contribute something to save their souls.”¹²⁵ In the winter of 1734, Boltzius prayed that God would “show us ways and means of helping them more.” The minister, however, was frustrated because the language barrier kept the Salzburgers from being able to enlighten the heathen. It was not a lack of desire but “our ignorance of their language” that “prevents us from showing them the way to eternal life.”¹²⁶

As a result, the Salzburger minister had a strong desire to learn the Indian language. In July 1734, Boltzius promised the Trustees that he and Gronau “will do our

¹²³*DRS*, 2:29, Dec. 30, 1734; *DRS*, 16:158, Jan. 6, 1754.

¹²⁴George F. Jones, ed., “The Secret Diary of Pastor Johann Martin Boltzius,” *GHQ* 53 (March 1969):84, Feb. 1736.

¹²⁵*DRS*, 4:8, Jan. 20, 1737; *DRS*, 12:13-14, Jan. 30, 1748.

¹²⁶*DRS*, 2:19, Nov. 1, 1734.

utmost Endeavours to learn the said language after which we have a hearty desire and delight.” Over the years, each time he saw an Indian his “desire for learning their language is renewed and I wish to have an opportunity for doing so.”¹²⁷ He met with some success, learning a few words here and there. The Indians were willing to tell him the names of objects “as can be pointed out to them” and Boltzius was quick to write them down and commit them to memory.¹²⁸

Having to “point out” objects, however, highlighted one of the many difficulties in learning the Indian languages. If a word one wished to learn was not a tangible object, how could one inquire about it? If there was no interpreter present, and a native speaker did not know what the English words “God” or “beautiful” meant, how could the student get him to verbalize those ideas? “Verbs, adjectives, etc cannot be learned from them,” complained a disheartened Boltzius.¹²⁹ These and other troubles were highlighted for the Salzburger, not only through their own experience, but also by their multiple inquiries with those who knew the Indian language. One Indian trader explained to Boltzius that they “would not get very far with it” for several reasons. He claimed there were no people who could teach it to them and no books from which to learn it, the natives never stayed in one place long enough to be able to study it, and that the “language itself is very

¹²⁷Johann Martin Boltzius to James Vernon, July 13, 1734, *CRG*, 20: 62; *DRS*, 2: 107, July 9, 1735.

¹²⁸Quoted in William C. Sturtevant, “The Misconnection of Guale and Yamassee with Muskogean.” *International Journal of American Linguistics* 60, no. 2 (Apr 1994), 143; Johann Martin Boltzius to James Vernon, July 13, 1734, in *OG*, 43. Boltzius collected the Indian words in a “little book.” See *DRS*, 2:29, Dec. 30, 1734.

¹²⁹*DRS*, 2:29, Dec. 30, 1734.

difficult,” with several different meanings attributed to the same word. Another man who had lived among the Indians for at least three years agreed that “it was a very poor language” which often used “the same word to express ten different things.”¹³⁰

It became evident that should the Salzburgers hope to learn the language, they would need some expert help. Boltzius lamented that “it would be more possible to accomplish something with these people...if only he would receive some Instruction from someone in this colony.”¹³¹ Determined to become fluent so that they could help convert the natives, the Salzburgers earnestly tried to locate someone who could teach them the language. As early as December 1734, Boltzius inquired about the availability of interpreter Johnny Musgrove, who accompanied Tomochichi and the Yamacraws to England. They hoped, after his return, that Oglethorpe would “let this man give us some help in learning the language of these poor heathens.”¹³² Unfortunately, Musgrove died the following year. When the Salzburgers heard that a soldier at Fort Ogeechee understood the language, they inquired into his availability to spend a few months to teach it to them. The commanding officer responded that the man only knew a few key phrases necessary for trading and thus “could not be of much use.” He did, however, redirect the Salzburgers to Mary Musgrove “since she had a special talent for expressing Indian terms in English, a talent not even possessed by her recently dead husband.”¹³³

¹³⁰*DRS*, 2:1-2, July 19, 1734; *DRS*, 2: 85, May 6, 1735.

¹³¹*DRS*, 2:108, July 9, 1735.

¹³²*DRS*, 2:29, Dec. 30, 1734.

¹³³*DRS*, 2:106, July 6, 1735.

The following month, Boltzius talked to Oglethorpe about recruiting Mary for instruction, and the General gave him a letter of introduction. Recently widowed, however, Mary could not neglect her homestead to take up residence with the Salzburger. Boltzius recognized that he would therefore have to travel to her, and at the time, he deemed that impractical.¹³⁴

It became clear to Boltzius that the only way he would be able to learn the language was to be completely immersed in it, and like Wesley, he had too many professional obligations to fulfill that requirement. His time was already stretched thin; he barely had enough time to visit the people in the congregation, and his multiple responsibilities “take much of my strength and prevent me from learning the Indian language.” He admitted in July 1735 that “it would be hard for me to leave my congregation for a while for the sake of learning the language.” A few days later, he added to his journal that “anyone wanting to do something with these heathens” had to have a livelihood that allowed him the leisure and luxury of living and traveling with the Indians so that he could become fluent.¹³⁵ Such a person would have to be able “to devote himself entirely to their service,” and there was probably a twinge of envy when Boltzius reported Benjamin Ingham’s success in learning the language, grumbling that “it may be said that he has ample time for this.”¹³⁶ If a Salzburger wanted to learn the

¹³⁴*DRS*, 2:126, Aug. 19/20, 1735.

¹³⁵*DRS*, 4:33, March 11, 1737; *DRS*, 2:106, July 6, 1735; *DRS*, 2:107, July 9, 1735.

¹³⁶*DRS*, 4:6-7, Jan. 15, 1737.

language, it was clear he would “probably have to be relieved of his ordinary ministerial duties in Ebenezer” before he could accomplish that goal.¹³⁷

Despite their inability to become fluent in any Indian tongues, the Salzburgers, like Wesley, continued to inquire into the political and religious nature of nearby tribes. As traders and soldiers passed through Ebenezer, Boltzius always tried to take time to gain information about the natives, gathering more knowledge about them even though neither he nor any of his parishioners could dedicate their efforts to them full-time.¹³⁸

For their part, the Indians returned the interest, often observing Salzburger religious meetings and expressing curiosity, hoping to learn more. Apparently, they already had some knowledge, for Mary Musgrove, who was “a very good Christian,” had given the Indians “some notions of the Holy Scriptures.”¹³⁹ German colonist Philip Von Reck reported that they “express their heartfelt desire to be taught a better understanding of the Superior being.” Within a month of the immigrants’ arrival, as the Salzburgers were arranging their “preparation and confession,” three Indians joined them and behaved with the necessary reverence.¹⁴⁰ In the following years, the Indians frequently joined the Salzburgers during their religious services – a few of them standing in the

¹³⁷Jones, “Boltzius Reports on Georgia,” 218; *DRS*, 2:239, Jan. 8, 1736.

¹³⁸See for example *DRS*, 2:85, Nov. 19, 1735; 2:207, May 6, 1735; and 8:452, Oct. 13, 1741. A typical interview included questions on where they lived, their types of societal organizations, the level of alcohol consumption, the level of danger to whites traveling among them, trade, types of soil, clothes, weather, worship and availability of useful transportation routes to their territory.

¹³⁹Quoted in Sturtevant, “Misconnection,” 143.

¹⁴⁰George Fenwick Jones, ed., “Commissary Von Reck’s Report on Georgia.” *GHQ* 47 (March 1963), 107; *DRS*, 1:64, March, 19, 1734.

church doorway watching “how we sang, prayed, and preached;” a family of Indians who observed the service for a short time; or an Indian man and his son who “sat quietly down on the bench with the rest of the congregation” during the evening prayer meeting while the women and girls socialized outside.¹⁴¹ On another occasion, some Indian children spent the day “watching how our children sang, prayed, and were instructed in school.”¹⁴²

Since religion and education were intertwined for the Salzburgers, they hoped they might teach the Indian children and strove to include them among the students at Ebenezer. The community was the first in Georgia to establish a school (1734) and an orphanage (1737). In the late 1730s, Boltzius reported that the orphanage had been built in part with the native children in mind, hoping that they could get “even a single one into our care and instruction.”¹⁴³ Both Boltzius and German colonist Philip Von Reck related early on that the Yamacraws were willing to send their children to Ebenezer to attend school, not surprising considering Tomochichi’s constant requests.¹⁴⁴ But nothing was done before 1736, and after that time Ingham was already working among the Yamacraws to build Irene. The Anglican minister requested help from the Salzburgers in January 1737, but they politely declined, stating that “every body is so busy with his own work that it seems impossible to take up work for others.”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹*DRS*, 15:71, June 2, 1751; 3:220, Oct. 3, 1736; 4:10-11, Jan. 25, 1737.

¹⁴²*DRS*, 4: 7, Jan.15, 1737.

¹⁴³Jones, “Boltzius reports on Georgia,” 218.

¹⁴⁴Sturtevant, “Misconnection,” 142-3; Jones, “Von Reck’s Report,” 107.

¹⁴⁵*DRS*, 3:6-7, Jan. 15, 1737.

The Salzburgers had high hopes that their nearest Indian neighbors would send some of their children to the Ebenezer school. But when Oglethorpe broached the subject with the Yuchi king in 1736, he responded that “they could not compel their children” but that he would tell his nation of the opportunity and “make an effort to persuade” them.¹⁴⁶ Although the minister gave tours of the dormitory to the Indians, who were impressed by the cleanliness and orderliness, the Yuchi king’s answer was probably the most gracious one they received. When Boltzius told several different Indian parents that they should leave their children with him to be educated in Ebenezer, their only reaction was to laugh in reply. In 1738, the orphanage housed seventeen children, but none of them were Indians.¹⁴⁷

Perhaps formal education of the Indians was not in the cards for the Salzburgers. But they, like the Moravians and the Anglicans, were surrounded by opportunities to engage the natives in religious exchange. The Salzburgers complained, however, that there were “many obstacles and difficulties in the way” and believed that “nothing much can be accomplished among the Indian vagabonds” near Ebenezer. In addition, the language barrier and the time needed to overcome that handicap stifled any conversion impulse among either their closest Indian neighbors or those “further up among the

¹⁴⁶George Fenwick Jones, ed., “Von Reck’s Second Report from Georgia.” *WMQ*, 3rd Ser., 22, no. 2 (April 1965), 327, May 22, 1736.

¹⁴⁷*DRS*, 5:177, Aug. 5, 1738; Edward Cashin, *Beloved Bethesda: A History of George Whitefield’s Home for Boys, 1740-2000* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2001), 9.

heathen nations”and led the Salzburgers to lament that they could “contribute nothing to winning over the Indians.”¹⁴⁸

Boltzius especially ignored the opportunities, letting his pessimism overwhelm his desire to work with the Indians. Despite the frequent interaction with the natives in the community’s first year, he could not see any means of imparting “even a little knowledge” to them. When a wealthy German heiress sent the Salzburgers money to be used for the “spiritual benefit of the Indians,” Boltzius redirected the money to pay for a schoolmaster because he felt there was little opportunity to work among the natives. He was aware his congregation neglected the Indians’ curiosity about Christianity, admitting that “we do nothing better now than to pray for them sincerely.”¹⁴⁹

Throughout the colonial period, the Salzburgers neglected the opportunities that existed to create a significant cultural exchange with the natives. Although the German missionaries had valid obstacles, they could have been overcome. Close to mid-century, Boltzius still had a desire to learn the natives’ language, although he had not made much progress on it in the past dozen years and had no plans to put it to immediate use. He simply wondered “Who knows what good it might do one day?” The Salzburgers remained optimistic that a religious bond could be forged with the Georgia natives, hopeful that “one day, He will show the heathens of this land the door to life through

¹⁴⁸*DRS*, 4:34, 9:47.

¹⁴⁹*DRS*, 2:29, Dec. 30, 1734; 2:141, Sept. 3, 1735; 2:239, Jan. 8, 1736.

gospel.” They could not determine, however, how or when that might occur.¹⁵⁰ Clearly, it would not be accomplished by the Salzburger of Ebenezer.

By the 1740s, the best chances for a cultural understanding between the Yamacraws, or any other Georgia natives, and the English based on religion had passed. The Wesley brothers had returned to England, one having lasted barely six months, the other just under two years, but neither having much interaction with the natives. If John had been so eager to work among the Indians, why could he not make it happen? Why didn’t he step in at Irene after Ingham’s departure? Why did he not establish any sort of relationship with Tomochichi? Benjamin Ingham had also returned to England after enjoying moderate success among the Indians. He had hoped to return to his work with more recruits, but he never did. The geographical distance certainly presented challenges, but if such efforts had been begun, why could they not be followed up? The Moravians had given up in Georgia and were moving to other colonies such as Pennsylvania and North Carolina to attempt other communal societies and further efforts among Indians. These would enjoy considerable success, especially in Bethlehem and Wachovia. But the Irene school house and the concept of cultural exchange that grew there were completely abandoned. And with the deaths of Tomochichi in 1739 and Toonahowi in 1743, even the Yamacraws ceased to exist as an independent entity separate from the Creek Nation. The Salzburger, though still present and eager to convert the natives, could not get past the language barrier and other professional obligations and consequently made no concerted efforts to connect with the natives.

¹⁵⁰*DRS*,; 8:213, 8:312,11:83.

These three groups – the Anglicans, the Moravians, and the Salzburger – represented the best chance Georgia colonists had of connecting with the natives through a religious bond. In all of these cases, allowances should be made for the practical difficulties they encountered and the reality that, in most cases, the Indians were not the only group demanding of their time. But the fact remains that in all of these scenarios, surprising opportunities were available to make significant inroads into cultural exchange based on religion. The missionaries simply did not capitalize on them. Their story was not one of no opportunity but rather of missed opportunity.

Throughout the rest of the colonial period, individuals meagerly attempted to make religious connections with the Georgia natives. As a hire of the SPG, the Highlanders' preacher John McLeod was supposed to "labour for the Instruction and Conversion of Heathens in the Neighbourhood" as well as minister to the Highland families. Although there are several references to McLeod's successful religious leadership of the colonists at Darien, none refer to any success among the natives.¹⁵¹

A few straggling Moravians passed through the colony, including Johann Hagan who appeared just weeks after the main body of Moravians left for Pennsylvania in 1740. Hagan had traveled to Georgia with the intention of being a missionary to the Cherokees,

¹⁵¹Oct. 2, 1735, Io: Walker to Herman Verelst, *CRG*, 21: 29; Frederick V. Mills Sr., "The Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge in British North America, 1730-1775." *Church History* 63, no. 1, (March 1994):20; *WJW*, 18:460, Jan 2, 1737; William V. Davis, ed. *George Whitefield's Journals, 1737-1741: To Which is Prefixed His Short Account (1746) and Further Account (1747)* (Gainesville, FL: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1969), 156. Since those commenting showed interest in Indian conversion, it is likely they would have mentioned it had it occurred.

but he also expected to find the support of his brethren in Georgia. Without them to support his efforts, he decided to stay closer to town. He visited the schoolhouse site at Irene and found the area virtually deserted, except for a few Yamacraw women. Deciding there was little opportunity for him among the Indians, he moved in with Savannah's current Anglican minister, George Whitefield. When Johann Boltzius asked him the following year if he still intended to do any missionary work among the local Indians, Hagan responded "If the Saviour will open the door for me, I shall go, but not before that."¹⁵²

If Hagan had really wanted the opportunity, he should have talked to the Trustees. At that time, the Trustees were still "looking for a way to give the heathens who are allied to the English an opportunity to recognize Christ the Saviour of the world." They therefore asked for suggestions from the Savannah magistrates, but no one seemed to have any practical ideas.¹⁵³ The Trustees discontinued funding for missionaries to the Indians after 1743.¹⁵⁴ In 1750, when the Anglican minister Bartholomew Zouberbuhler asked the Society to send over a variety of religious texts to use "toward an Instruction of the Indians," his requests went unheeded.¹⁵⁵ The support for Indian missionary activity in Georgia had died.

¹⁵²John Perceval, *Manuscripts of the Earl of Egmont, Diary of Viscount Percival afterwards first Earl of Egmont*, 3 vols. (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1920-23), 3:91, Nov. 16, 1739; Fries, *Moravians in Georgia*, 221; *DRS*, 8:452.

¹⁵³*DRS*, 8:452.

¹⁵⁴Sweet, *Negotiating for Georgia*, 94.

¹⁵⁵Count Zinzendorf to Benjamin Martyn, Dec 20, 1750, *CRG*, 26:105.

The Anglican ministers still had their hands full just trying to see to the religious needs of the European colonists, and in Wesley's wake, there was a long line of ministers who filled the post at Savannah with very little interest in their native neighbors. George Whitefield, appointed in 1738 to replace Wesley, was exclusively focused on founding Georgia's orphanage, Bethesda, and put all of his time and effort towards its success.¹⁵⁶ William Norris and Christopher Orton followed sequentially, but each lasted only one year in the position, and neither had any curiosity about the natives.¹⁵⁷ When Oglethorpe led his expedition to Coweta in 1739, he lamented that "This would have been an excellent occasion for introducing a missionary had I had a good one here." Appointed in 1742, Thomas Bosomworth certainly had interest in the local Indians – he married Mary Musgrove in 1744 – but he had little interest in ministering to them, or for that matter, to the colonists either.¹⁵⁸ Stability returned to Savannah's parish when Bartholomew Zouberbuhler was appointed in 1746. He would serve the colonists for

¹⁵⁶See Cashin, *Beloved Bethesda*, passim; Although before his departure he preached a sermon in Bath, England, "to promote a collection for the support of the missionaries to convert the Indians in Georgia," he did not carry that zeal to the colony. Also see Whitefield's "Sermon Preached Before the Governor, and Council, and the House of Assembly, in Georgia, on January 28, 1770" in George Whitefield, *The Works of the Reverend George Whitefield* (London: E. and C. Dilly, 1771-1772) [microform]; *CRG*, 29:174, Feb. 10, 1737. Whitefield did visit Tomochichi on his death bed and inquired about his religious state, but with this one exception, Whitefield records in his journal no other meetings with natives. See Davis, *George Whitefield's Journals*, 150-52 for the account of his meeting with Tomochichi.

¹⁵⁷William Norris ran into some trouble when he apparently impregnated a servant girl. He left to serve as chaplain to Oglethorpe's regiment in Queen Anne's War. See *DRS*, 8:107; *CRG*, 5:84. Orton took over in July 1741 but died in Oct, 1742. See Harman Verelst to William Stephens, Aug. 7, 1741, *CRG*, 30:191.

¹⁵⁸James Oglethorpe to Egmont, June 13, 1739, in *OG*, 405; See Chapter 5 below.

over twenty years, but like Whitefield, he too had a pet project – he spent the majority of his efforts outside of his normal ministerial duties trying to convert Georgia’s slaves.¹⁵⁹

None of the Anglicans after Wesley showed any inclination to work among the Indians.

Although there were some attempts at missionizing southeastern natives in the 1750s and 1760s, none can be attributed to Georgia. The Presbyterian missions of John Martin and William Richardson to the Cherokees in 1757-1759, and the journey of John Phillip Hammerer to the Cherokees in 1765 were both sponsored by the Virginians, with some subsequent help from the South Carolinians. But for the Georgians, missionary activity remained non-existent in those decades.¹⁶⁰ In 1748, Salzburger Johann Boltzius reported that “at this time, no efforts are being made in this country to assist these poor people in learning about the Christian religion.”¹⁶¹ At mid-century, he glumly reported that “not the slightest start has been made towards their [the Indians’] instruction and conversion to the Christian religion.” Hoping that the colony’s stability would allow for more wholehearted efforts, he pleaded with the magistrates that “serious efforts” should

¹⁵⁹CRG, 1:478, Nov. 1, 1745.

¹⁶⁰J. Ralph Randolph, *British Travelers Among the Southern Indians, 1660-1763* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), 130; William Richardson, “Account of my proceedings,” Microform reproduction of manuscript (New York: New York Public Library, 1962), located in Duke University Special Collections; Abraham E. Knepler, “Eighteenth Century Cherokee Educational Efforts,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 20, no. 1 (March 1942):57; Mills, “The Society,” 25; Samuel C. Williams, “Christian Missions to the Overhill Cherokees,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 12, no. 1, (March 1934):66.

¹⁶¹DRS, 12:14, Jan. 30, 1748.

be made to instruct and convert the Indians. In 1751, he remained disappointed: of such efforts, “we still hear and see nothing.”¹⁶²

The religious state of the colony remained poor throughout the 1760s, for both whites and Indians. One of Dr. Bray’s Associates working out of Augusta in 1766 reported that he could make no religious inroads upon the Chickasaws. He blamed his failure partly on the local white population, who did not encourage Indian interest in Christianity, they being “as destitute of a sense of religion as the Indians themselves.”¹⁶³ In an ironic twist, John Wesley was one of the few people still championing the cause of converting the Georgia natives in the 1760s, though he was of course working in England. On August 8, 1767, he preached a sermon designed to motivate his listeners to take up a collection “for the Indian schools in America.” Wesley was pleased that his congregation successfully raised a large sum of money. In his diary that evening, however, he questioned what good money could do. Money could not convert heathens. Gold and silver could do no more than iron and lead. What was needed instead was highly qualified, pious people willing to go among the Indians, missionaries willing, if need be, to martyr themselves for the cause. The missionaries in Georgia would only be successful, according to Wesley, when God “shall have chosen one or more to magnify Him in the sight of the heathen by dying, not with a stoical or Indian indifference, but

¹⁶²Klaus G. Loewald, Beverly Starika, and Paul S. Taylor, eds., “John Martin Bolzius Answers a Questionnaire on Carolina and Georgia: Part II.” *WMQ*, 3rd Ser., 15, no. 2 (April 1958): 245; *DRS*, 15:245.

¹⁶³Quoted in Charles Frederick Pascoe, *Two Hundred Years of the S. P. G.: an Historical Account of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1701-1900* (London, Published at the Society's office, 1901), 28.

blessing and praying for their murderers, and praising God in the midst of flame with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” Those who had attempted to missionize the Indians up to that point had fallen far short.

In this, Wesley offers a scathing critique of all the colonial Georgia missionaries, including himself. Knowing that little had been accomplished, even in the thirty years since he had last been in Georgia, he summed up the results of Georgia’s colonial missionary activity: “They have indeed sent thousands to hell but never yet brought a soul to heaven.”¹⁶⁴ Beyond their shortcomings in the conversion effort, however, was a complete negligence that meant Georgia could not capitalize on another type of important bond with the natives; in the colonial period, religion would not build a connection between the Georgia colonists and the local Indians. They thus missed a key opportunity, and any cultural relations between the two groups would have to be forged in other ways.

¹⁶⁴ *WJW*, 22:97-98, Aug. 8, 1767; John Wesley to David Humphreys, Secretary of the SPG, July 22, 1737, Telford, *Letters of John Wesley*, 225.

Chapter 5

The Mary Musgrove Matrimonial Dynasty: Thirty Years of Cultural Brokerage

Mary Musgrove came from two different worlds, but she was able to bridge them in such a prominent way that her story has become well-known. The pattern of her life was representative of many mixed-blood children as well as members of interracial unions, but because of her powerful connections to prominent people on both sides, her influence was atypical.¹ The leaders of both the Creeks and the British looked to Mary to provide them with an understanding of the other, trusting her to guide them through the haze of foreign languages, protocol, and cultural concepts. Oglethorpe recognized the value of such a person immediately upon his arrival and employed her as his official interpreter. But the services that Mary supplied Oglethorpe as his “Indian agent” were also provided to the Creek leaders. Having such a close tie to the colony’s founder made her even more valuable to the natives, and Mary thus also became the Indians’ “British agent.” For thirty years, Mary successfully mediated between the natives and the British,

¹For a discussion of Mary and her representation of other native women and the changing gender roles in the eighteenth-century Southeast, see Michele Gillespie, “The Sexual Politics of Race and Gender: Mary Musgrove and the Georgia Trustees,” in Catherine Clinton and Michele Gillespie, ed., *The Devil’s Lane: Sex and Race in the Early South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), ch. 13, and Michael Morris, “Emerging Gender Roles for Southeastern Indian Women: The Mary Musgrove Story Reconsidered,” *GHQ* 89:1(2005):1-24.

bringing members of the two societies together through trade, religion, and military alliances.

Typical of many cultural brokers, Mary not only facilitated the exchange of information and cultural values between the natives and the colonists but also forged a new identity for herself that merged the two worlds to which she belonged. She did not lead a schizophrenic existence, vacillating between separate identities of native and Euroamerican. Instead, she led her own life as an example, holding onto traditional values such as matrilineal kinship obligations and importance of rank while incorporating colonial values of property, Christianity, and the pursuit of rights through courts and laws. Most important, Mary never abandoned either culture, and both societies fully recognized her as one of their own.

Born to a Creek mother and a white Indian trader around 1700, Mary was known as Coosaponakeesa among the Creeks. The rest of Mary's lineage and early history are largely shrouded in mystery. Her father was most likely trader Edward Griffin Sr., because Mary claimed a man named Edward Griffin Jr. as her brother.² Relationships between Indian women and traders were frequently temporary, and Indian women often had serial relationships resulting in the possibility of births by multiple fathers. Since the

²The younger Edward was sent by Chigelli on a diplomatic mission to Tomochichi in January 1735, visited Mary at the Cowpens in 1736, and died as an English ally while fighting the Spanish in 1740. See Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Jan. 20, 1735, CRG 21:71; *WJW*, 18:380d, April 26, 1936; James Oglethorpe to Egmont, Jan. 25, 1741, in *OG*, 2:536; Doris Fisher, "Mary Musgrove: Creek Englishwoman" (Ph.D. diss., Dept. of History, Emory University, 1990), 51, 129.

possibility of Edward being a half-brother cannot be ruled out completely, Mary's paternity must remain in some doubt.

On the maternal side, Mary argued that she was born in Coweta, the seat of power for the Lower Creek nation, a niece through her mother to Emperor Brims and Chigelli and cousin to Malatchi, Brims' successor. She is known, however, to have had some relatives in Tuckabatchee, an Upper Creek town; hence some people – contemporaries of Mary as well as recent historians – have argued that she was not part of the Coweta chiefly line of decent.³ Although most scholars concede that her mother was Brims' sister, even if there was not a direct kinship connection, Mary may have still had a right to claim her exalted status.

First, Tuckabatchee was a prominent town in its own right, perhaps not as important as Coweta, but termed one of "four great 'foundation towns' of the Creek Confederation."⁴ Second, in Creek society, kinship terminologies applied to a larger group of people than among the English, but still carried the requisite reciprocal obligations. Anthropologist Charles Hudson reminds us that kinship terms for the Creeks refer to "*groups or categories of matrilineal kinsmen rather than [to] individuals.*" So the Creek word for "father" could be applied to any male relative in the father's lineage and generation. Furthermore, the Creeks also denoted kinship through clan membership. Members of each clan lived in each Creek town; so even if Mary was from another town,

³CRG 6:272, August 17, 1749; Rodney M. Baine, "Myths of Mary Musgrove," *GHQ* 76, no. 2 (1992):428-430.

⁴Steven C. Hahn, *The Invention of the Creek Nation, 1670-1763* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 12.

she may have shared clan membership with Brims, Chigelli and Malatchi in Coweta. Clan kinship was as important to the Creeks as blood lineage was to the English and created rights and obligations among its members. Mary may have been claiming this connection to Brims and his successors.⁵

Third, high rank in Creek society was not necessarily inherited but rather earned. Certainly the powerful genealogical line of Brims and the political influence of Coweta were important and recognized as rights to status, but no Creek leader could compel other Indians – and certainly not the entire nation -- to follow his or her mandates. They could only persuade, hoping to forge a consensus among the group. Therefore people with impressive oratorical skills were highly respected among the Creeks, as were those who had proven themselves in war, or those who had the experience and wisdom of age. Thus, many “non-regal” individuals obtained exalted status without being born to it, garnering the name of a “beloved man or woman.”⁶ Through whatever means, Mary certainly acquired a level of respect and trust from the Indians who looked to her throughout her lifetime for guidance and intercession with the whites. It is likely that Mary had direct kinship ties to the major Creek leaders of the day; but even if she did not share a direct family line, she certainly had a close relation with her Creek “brethren,”

⁵Charles Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1976), 185-96 (quotation on 189.)

⁶Hudson, *Southeastern Indians*, 223, 225-26.

including the leaders Chigelli and Malatchi, more so than any white colonist would have, and thus earned the right to draw upon that kinship connection as mandated and understood by Creek culture.

As the child of a mixed-race union, Mary was brought up learning the values of both of her parents' cultures. Typical of many métis daughters, she initially stayed among her mother's people, being brought up in the Creek culture. At about the age of seven, however, she went to live in South Carolina and was "there baptized, educated, and bred up in the principles of Christianity."⁷ She stayed among the English until her return to Coweta just after the Yamassee War. At that time, her identity was interwoven and tied up with both the English and the Creek, fully fluent in both languages, fully understanding the governing principles of both cultures, and having been raised in both religions.

Mary's first appearance on the historical scene was prophetic in foretelling the importance she would have as a cultural broker throughout her life. In the aftermath of the 1715 Yamassee War, John Musgrove, a well-known trader and colonel, led an expedition to Coweta to negotiate peace between the English and the Creeks. Mary – as the niece of the famed Creek leader Brims – was betrothed to the colonel's son in order to

⁷Mary Bosomworth, Memorial to Col. Alexander Heron, Aug. 10, 1747, in Charles C. Jones, *The History of Georgia* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1883), 1:386; John T. Juricek, ed., *Georgia Treaties, 1733-1763*. Vol. 11 of *Early American Indian Documents: Treaties and Laws, 1607-1789*, ed. Alden T. Vaughan (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1989), 141-42.

cement the alliance.⁸ Colonel Musgrove had long been a familiar figure among the Creeks, living among them as a trader and serving frequently as interpreter, and he understood the important symbolism of uniting the two families.⁹ Musgrove stored all his trade goods, an impressive amount that included clothing, ribbons, beads, and riding equipment and carried in by a dozen packhorses, at Brim's house. The resulting change in atmosphere in the town was obvious. The English were permitted to come and go as they pleased, and one Spanish observer was surprised to find the English in Coweta "loitering with much laxity."¹⁰ The resulting reciprocal kinship obligations were required not only of Musgrove's and Brims's families but extended to their larger cultures as well. The betrothal of Mary and Johnny was a pledge from both sides that the fighting was over, and it successfully secured the peace after South Carolina's most devastating Indian war.

The couple was betrothed in 1717, but because of the question of Mary's birth date, it is not clear if they married at that time or if they were required to wait until she came of age. In any event, the couple were married by 1723, at which time they moved to Musgrove lands in Pon Pon, South Carolina. The Musgroves had no difficulty being

⁸Michael Morris, "Emerging Gender Roles for Southeastern Women: The Mary Musgrove Story Reconsidered," *GHQ* 89, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 5; Michael D. Green, "Mary Musgrove: Creating a New World," in Theda Perdue, ed., *Sifters: Native American Women's Lives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 31; David H. Corkran, *The Creek Frontier, 1540-1783* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 63; Hahn, *Invention of the Creek Nation*, 104-05.

⁹Crane, *Creek Frontier*, 83, 150.

¹⁰Mark Boyd, "Documents Describing the Second and Third Expeditions of Lieutenant Diego Peña to Apalachee and Apalachicola in 1717 and 1718," *FHQ* 31, no.1 (July 1952): 118.

accepted in the colonists' world, becoming large landholders in Colleton County by the late 1720s. Both had been educated among the colonists and Christianized, and with white fathers, the patriarchal English accepted them as belonging to colonial society. At the same time, however, the couple maintained their Creek connections as well; Johnny was of mixed-blood descent himself, and his Creek uncle, Willimico, resided with them for a time in the 1720s. Other natives, friends and relatives of both Johnny and Mary, frequently visited the plantation.¹¹ In addition, the Musgroves were active and successful in the Indian trade, an occupation surely helped by their native connections and one that kept them in close contact with the natives. Because both of them had Creek mothers and thus strong connections with the tribe, the matrilineal Indian society fully accepted them as their own. Tribal ties and kinship obligations were understood and acted upon when the Musgroves were involved.¹² They successfully maintained their connections to both sides. In this respect, they were typical cultural brokers – keeping ties to their heritage, nurturing a new identity while not rejecting one or the other, still fully invested and accepted in both cultures. The Musgroves were viewed by the Creeks as Creeks, by the English as English, and saw themselves as members of both cultures.

Also connected to both the Creeks and the Musgroves was Tomochichi's band of Yamacraws. Tomochichi may have been some relation to Mary, and at the very least the band was familiar with the Musgroves and their trading establishment in South Carolina. Displaced in the late 1720s and looking for more economic security after their relocation,

¹¹Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 69.

¹²Green, "Mary Musgrove," in *Sifters*, 31; Morris, "Gender Roles," 7.

the Yamacraws invited the Musgroves in 1732 to open a trading post at Pipemaker's Creek, about a mile from the Yamacraw Bluff, on the southern side of the Savannah River.¹³ The agreement with South Carolina following the Yamassee War guaranteed that no whites would settle south or west of the Savannah River, but both Musgroves could legitimately claim Indian heritage. Their presence on the Yamacraw Bluff was therefore not seen as a violation. Moreover, both the Indians and the whites recognized the possible benefits their presence there would provide, both in economic and social terms. The South Carolina government therefore agreed to let them relocate. Very quickly, the Musgroves had a thriving trading establishment, bridging the white merchants of Charles Town and the Indians of Yamacraw Bluff and the wider Creek nation.¹⁴

When Oglethorpe and the first Georgia colonists arrived in early 1733, the Musgroves were well situated at Pipemaker's Creek. They had a good-sized house that accommodated them and their sons, a thriving trading post that served as the cultural crossroads of the area and brought in about one-sixth of the total deerskin trade of Charles Town, a cowpen where they bred and raised cattle, and a plantation that had acres of peas, potatoes, corn, and other crops under cultivation.¹⁵ Not only were they well established economically, they were entrenched culturally. The Musgroves were not

¹³Green, "Mary Musgrove," in *Sifters*, 31; Hahn, *Invention of the Creek Nation*, 194; Morris, "Gender Roles," 7.

¹⁴Mary Bosomworth, Memorial to Col. Alexander Heron, Aug. 10, 1747, in Jones, *History of Georgia*, 1:387; Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 65; Green, "Mary Musgrove," in *Sifters*, 31-32.

¹⁵Braund, *Deerskins and Duffles*, 41, Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 82.

foreigners or interlopers encroaching on Indian territory or threatening colonial settlements. They were viewed by both cultures as friends and allies and, most important, as a welcome connection between the two. On the eve of Georgia settlement, the Musgroves were recognized already as people intimately involved with securing peace and with a history of brokering cultural relations for years. Their roles as cultural brokers would become even more important with the creation of the Georgia colony.

Just as South Carolina had provided the rangers for the early protection of the new colony, it also provided a huge assistance when it enlisted the aid of the Musgroves. The South Carolina assembly knew that of all people, the Musgroves were perfect to negotiate between the Indians and the new colonists. They alerted the couple to Oglethorpe's plan to settle a new colony in their vicinity and requested them "to give the colonists every assistance."¹⁶ The Indians must have been understandably concerned upon hearing the news, but Mary calmed their fears, likely touting the benefits that the Yamacraws and especially Tomochichi stood to gain. Reminding them of the possibility for increased trade, protection, and a chance to increase their stature among the Creeks, Mary convinced the Yamacraws to allow the new settlement.

Oglethorpe's impressive reputation for treating the Indians well certainly helped to develop friendly native-colonial relations after his arrival, but Mary laid the foundation. Tomochichi wanted to see for himself, certainly, but his initial attitude of guarded friendship was offered on the good faith of Mary's word. The Indians obviously knew of the colonists' impending arrival, greeting them along the banks with a volley

¹⁶Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 83.

from their muskets and arriving themselves to treat with Oglethorpe just an hour after they landed. Tomochichi did not send emissaries in his stead but rather trusted Mary's information and judgement enough to feel secure in not only going himself along with a few select headmen, but confident enough to bring along their wives. Mary was thus the one that laid the groundwork for the unusual friendship and cooperation that would develop between Oglethorpe and the Yamacraw leader and, by extension, the colonists and the natives.¹⁷

The Musgroves' skills were invaluable to Oglethorpe and Tomochichi, and Johnny or Mary or both presided over every meeting between the two leaders until Tomochichi's death in 1739. In the initial encounter, both of the Musgroves were present to serve as mediators and interpreters. The meeting was accompanied by much pomp from both cultures. The Indians made an impressive procession, singing and chanting as they approached, wearing white feathers in their hair. The settlers, recognizing the gravity of the meeting, attempted as best as they could to make an impressive and dignified showing. The guard returned the Indians' volley in salute, Oglethorpe waited reverently outside his tent to receive them, and no one interrupted when one Indian approached Oglethorpe and "moved his fans over him & Strok'd him on every side with them," an act which continued for fifteen minutes. The Indians also lined up -- first the men, then the women -- to shake hands with Oglethorpe before retiring to the privacy of his tent to hold the meeting.¹⁸ Both Tomochichi and Oglethorpe were consummate

¹⁷Thomas Causton to his wife, March 12, 1733, EM, 14200:54; *JPG*, 35.

¹⁸Thomas Causton to his wife, March 12, 1733, EM, 14200:54.

diplomats, but Tomochichi's use of a traditional European greeting and Oglethorpe's awareness and acceptance of the Indians' traditional ceremonies suggests that the Musgroves may have already been at work transmitting vital information about each culture to the other.

Mary's years of providing hospitality for the Georgia settlers began that first day as well. The settlers were not able to set up enough tents for everyone by nightfall, and a few accepted the Musgroves' invitation to spend the night at their home. Their hostess provided "a handsome supper," and the Indians provided the entertainment in the form of singing, drumming, and dancing.¹⁹

A few days later, Mary interpreted during the official meeting that secured a treaty of friendship between the English and the Yamacraws, which gave the English permission to settle Savannah.²⁰ But Tomochichi understood his limitations, knowing he could not speak for the entire Creek nation and cautioned that Oglethorpe would need to treat directly with the Creeks to secure their blessings as well. Mary and Tomochichi thus forwarded Oglethorpe's invitation to their relatives in the Creek nation, reassuring them of the value of traveling to Georgia and meeting with Oglethorpe. The Lower Creek headmen responded favorably, and a large delegation arrived in Savannah on May 18. They were led by Youhowlakee of Coweta and his ward, Essabo, Brims' successor and close kin of Mary. One historian has argued that the unusually large delegation – consisting of at least fifty-two headmen – indicated that the Creeks were extremely

¹⁹ *JPG*, 35-36.

²⁰ *JPG*, 43-45; Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 83.

alarmed over the prospect of another English settlement in their territory.²¹ While the headmen may have sought to present a strong show of force to the leader of the new settlement, the large turnout was probably at least in part due to the influence and reassurances of their kinswoman, Mary. Johnny acted as official interpreter at this conference, but Mary was also a constant presence throughout the negotiations, which resulted in a treaty of alliance on May 21, 1733.²² The treaty itself was of course important for Oglethorpe and the Georgians, but having such a large number of adherers and such high-ranking ones greatly increased the legitimacy of the negotiations and the resulting agreements on trade, alliance, and land cessions. If fewer headmen had responded to Oglethorpe's invitation, which likely would have happened without Mary's coaxing, the initial footing of the Georgia colony would have been much less secure.

By helping to gain the approval of first the Yamacraws and then the Creeks, Mary immediately established her importance as a cultural broker. Her influence as someone who could negotiate the terrain between these two cultures, bringing them to common ground for the mutual benefit of both parties, would continue for three decades. Her negotiating and interpreting skills were not the only ones called upon, as she provided many different benefits for the nascent colony. She supplied food, hospitality, presents, information, and perhaps most importantly, she offered a means for smoothing ruffled feathers and continuing to garner the trust and friendship of the Indians on Georgia's

²¹Hahn, *Invention of the Creek Nation*, 158.

²²Common Council Ratification of Treaty of Friendship and Commerce between James Oglethorpe and the Chief Men of the Lower Creek Nation, Oct 18, 1733, *CRG*, 32:72-74; Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 83; Green, "Mary Musgrove," in *Sifters*, 34.

behalf. In these first two years alone, Mary established the pattern of cultural brokerage that would help her to shape Anglo-Creek relations and maintain alliances for most of Georgia's colonial history.

Already having a thriving plantation in 1733, the Musgroves were a major source of food for the colonists as they fought to establish their new settlement. Mary and Johnny shared seeds and knowledge about the crops that would grow in the area. Before the colonists could fend for themselves, the Musgroves frequently provided a variety of agricultural crops as well as a ready supply of beef from their cowpen. Mary also encouraged the neighboring Indians to help provide the settlers with food, often resulting in large donations of venison and turkey.²³ In addition, they frequently shared their own food with visiting guests, both Indians and colonists.²⁴

The Musgroves' hospitality, however, extended beyond the culinary. Situated on the outskirts of town and along the Indian trading paths, the Musgrove plantation was the ideal location for the two cultures to meet on common ground, or at least to announce their arrival and their intentions to meet. The trader couple frequently conducted Indians and whites through the forests surrounding the town and into the safety of Savannah. Johnny guided whites such as military "expresses" bringing information to Oglethorpe's

²³Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 84; Samuel Eveleigh to James Oglethorpe, May 7, 1734, *CRG* 20:55; Thomas Christie to James Oglethorpe, Dec. 14, 1734, in *OG*, 1:70; Helen Todd, *Tomochichi: Indian Friend of the Georgia Colony* (Atlanta, GA: Cherokee Publishing Company, 1977), 82; Morris, "Gender Roles," 7.

²⁴*Von Reck's Voyage: Drawings and Journal of Philip Georg Friedrich von Reck*, ed. by Kristian Hvidt (Savannah, GA: Beehive Press, 1980), February 22, 1736, 36; *CRG*, 4:49, Dec. 13, 1737; *JPG*, 35-36.

military camp, and both often escorted Indian headmen into town to announce their official arrivals.²⁵

But without the requisite facilities to house visiting emissaries, the Savannah magistrates were forced to find an alternate place for headmen to stay while treating with the Georgians. The obvious choice was the Musgroves' plantation, where the Indians would find welcoming hosts, people who shared their language and culture, and an establishment far better settled and able to provide for their guests than most of the establishments in town. Better than anyone else in the colony, Mary understood that Indian culture required hospitality for visiting dignitaries and knew exactly what the headmen expected. Secretary William Stephens frequently complained of the expense required in hosting these delegations, but he knew they were essential to continued good relations with the Indians. The magistrates dared not skimp on the hospitality for fear of offending the natives. Furthermore, the need was nearly constant, as Indian guests were frequently on their way to and from Savannah, and important meetings often brought large numbers of headmen, warriors, and their families to town. When Chigelli arrived for a conference in June 1736, the delegation consisted of over sixty Indians – including “the chiefs of 7 towns and their attendants,” – all of whom camped out at the Musgroves.²⁶

²⁵Patrick Mackay to Thomas Causton, March 27, 1735, *CRG*, 20:291; Joseph Fitzwater to James Oglethorpe, Jan. 16, 1735, in *OG*, 1:87.

²⁶*EJ*, 171, June 25, 1736.

With their well-stocked and thriving trading post, the Musgroves were also the leading suppliers for the colony. Mary allowed the colonists to receive supplies from her store on credit, especially during the early years of the colony; she would later tally unpaid debts to a total of £800 sterling.²⁷ In addition, the trading post supplied the local Indians when they traded their deerskins, but the Musgroves' post was also the source of the colony's Indian presents. With Mary overseeing everything, she was not only able to provide the necessary items, she had the cultural knowledge to understand the symbolic importance attributed to the presents, which items would be most favored by the Indians and how to best distribute the gifts among the headmen so according to their various ranks of power and prestige. The town magistrates understood how important the distribution of gifts was to continued good relations with the Indians and the symbolic purpose accorded them, and they recognized Mary's role in the process. In one instance, the Trustees' storekeeper, Thomas Causton, hoped to make an impressive showing, "well knowing what benefit it would be to the British interest" and therefore, as usual, coordinated with the Musgroves to purchase and deliver the presents.²⁸ On another occasion, Causton acknowledged that he had "been much obliged" to Mary not only for procuring a large amount of presents but for delivering them to the appropriate people in the appropriate amounts.²⁹

²⁷Memorial of Mr. Bosomworth and wife, Nov. 26, 1754, *CRG*, 26:481.

²⁸Isaac Chardon to James Oglethorpe, Aug. 1, 1734, *CRG*, 20:64.

²⁹Thomas Causton to James Oglethorpe, July 5, 1735, in *OG*, 1:217.

Like other traders, the Musgroves were vital in securing diplomatic information concerning the temper of the Indians. In those crucial first few years, they repeatedly relayed important information concerning native activities and viewpoints and, most important, served to maintain or restore friendly relations when offenses occurred. They also relayed information concerning the natives' activities among the Spanish, whether exploits against or kind receptions of their overtures. One episode raised concern for the Georgians when Tallaphoheeche, a Yamacraw headman, did not arrive to accept the Trustees' gifts appointed for him. Concerned that the headman was expressing his dissatisfaction with them, the magistrates turned to Mary. Always in the know, she assuaged their fears, happily reporting that the headman "has accepted very gratefully of your Honours favor to him, and his Relations." His absence, she continued, was only occasioned by his being away fighting the Spanish, further good news for the Georgians. She reassured them that he would pay them a visit upon his return.³⁰ In 1735, a group of disgruntled indentured servants plotted to rebel, and many Georgians feared that the local Indians were involved in the conspiracy. Tomochichi assured authorities that they knew nothing of the plan, and his claims of innocence were strengthened when the Musgroves assured the Trustees of the Indians' fidelity, attesting that they were in "no way concerned in it."³¹ Clearly, the Musgroves were aware of the activities and demeanor of their Indian relations, but Mary's influence and knowledge extended to other tribes

³⁰ Anonymous to Thomas Broughton, Feb 22, 1736, *CRG*, 21:344; Thomas Causton to the Trustees, July 25, 1735, *CRG*, 20:452.

³¹ Thomas Christie to the Trustees, March 19, 1735, in *OG*, 1:135.

beyond the Yamacraws and Creeks. She could even supply vital information regarding the staunch French allies, the Choctaws, and helped to coordinate Thomas Jones' efforts to establish a trading agreement with them in 1734. When that tribe sent headmen to meet with leaders from South Carolina and Georgia, they stayed at the Musgroves, who hosted them for over three weeks.³²

The Choctaw delegation actually arrived at their plantation while Johnny was overseas. Needing to report on the colony's progress to the Trustees, Oglethorpe had decided in early 1734 to return to England and invited Tomochichi and a few other Yamacraw representatives to travel with him and meet the leading dignitaries in England. The envoy obviously needed an interpreter, so Johnny accompanied the group, while Mary remained at the Cowpen keeping an eye on Indian relations within the colony.³³ The travels lasted from March to December 1734; the fact that both men – Musgrove and Oglethorpe – were willing to leave Mary in charge of running the extensive Musgrove holdings and directing Indian relations for the colony in their absence attests to her strength and ability and the confidence both men had in her. Mary managed both affairs well during those ten months, though the time was not without its tribulations. Mary's handling of affairs, however, proved how vital her role was in maintaining friendly relations between the natives and the white colonists.

³²Mary Musgrove to James Oglethorpe, July 17, 1734, in *OG*, 1:44-45.

³³For Musgrove's work as interpreter for the Indians in England, see *EJ*, 66, Oct. 9, 1734, 67, Oct 18, 1734; Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 84-89; Julie A. Sweet, *Negotiating for Georgia: British-Creek Relations in the Trustee Era, 1733-1752* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2005), ch. 3.

The biggest threat to stable Indian relations during the absence of Tomochichi, Oglethorpe, and Johnny ironically came from the Musgroves' trading partner, Joseph Watson. Since Watson did not appear in the colony before the spring of 1734, it is likely he became their partner only in preparation for Johnny going overseas. He spent some time in Carolina before coming to Georgia, but it is unknown whether he had any experience trading among the Indians. In February 1734, Oglethorpe recommended that the Trustees grant Watson a five-hundred-acre lot adjoining the Musgroves.³⁴ Within a few months, he had cleared a few acres of land and was raising some cattle, but he spent most of his time among the Indians. In an effort to further his trading with them, Watson freely employed the use of liquor, both for his own consumption and that of his native trading partners. Although Oglethorpe had banned the sale of rum in an effort to avoid the notorious trading practices that had created trouble for South Carolina, Watson was often reported to be drunk and carousing with the Indians.³⁵ This resulted in some unusual practices, and witnesses reported that he was "so seldom sober that it was hard to guess if he was not mad. He would be naked with the Indians, drunk with them, lie down with them and sometimes pretended to baptize them."³⁶

It did not take long for the magistrates to recognize that Watson was "unfit for a trader." They knew that those who had direct interaction with the natives, especially so close to town, needed to behave in a manner above reproach, or else the colony would

³⁴James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, Feb. 26, 1734, *CRG*, 20:50-51.

³⁵Samuel Eveleigh to James Oglethorpe, Oct. 19, 1734, *CRG*, 20:87.

³⁶Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Jan. 16 1735, in *OG*, 1:96.

run the risk of a deterioration in Indian relations. The Musgroves understood this as well and were appalled by his actions. When Johnny returned to the colony and heard of the problems Watson had caused, he immediately distanced himself from his trading partner, complaining to Oglethorpe that “Mr. Watson who was my partner when I Came for England I do not Like nor Cannot Approve of his way of Proceeding.”³⁷ Mary, in the intervening months, had dealt directly with Watson as her neighbor and in attempts to counteract his negative influence among the Indians. On at least two occasions, they even brought their arguments before Savannah’s court.

Mary and Watson frequently argued, no doubt most often about his treatment of the natives. Although her husband was abroad and her most powerful advocate Oglethorpe was as well, Mary was a strong woman who did not hesitate to assert her rights – as an Indian or as a colonist – and would not sit quietly by while her friends and family were mistreated and the Anglo-native relations she had worked hard to cultivate were threatened. Mary therefore took legal action to protect herself and her native peoples. As a Christian, Mary was allowed to testify under oath. She was recognized as an English colonist and allowed to present evidence pertinent to any ongoing cases before the court and to sue for damages. When Watson, likely overwhelmed by her strong presence and constant reprimands, called her a witch, she sued him for libel and received a judgment in her favor.³⁸ Two weeks later, she hauled him before the court

³⁷John Musgrove to James Oglethorpe, Jan 24, 1735, *CRG*, 20:197.

³⁸Green, “Mary Musgrove,” in *Sifters*, 35; Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Jan. 16, 1735, in *OG*, 1:96.

again. This time he had to answer to a charge of assault, having presented a gun and “endeavouring to shoot Mrs. Musgrove” who fortunately overpowered the trader and wrestled the gun away. Again found guilty, Watson paid “£5 sterling damages and he was ordered to be bound for his good behaviour.”³⁹ With both cases going in Mary’s favor, it is clear that the Savannah courts had no problem with her bringing a case or testifying. Neither her native nor her gender status aroused concerns that would deprive her of her English rights.

The situation became alarming for the colony when Watson turned on the Indians. The very next day after being found guilty of attacking Mary Musgrove, he was called to court again to face another charge of assault. In this instance, he was tried “for beating Esteechee, the Indian, and defrauding him of his goods.” Since Esteechee could not testify under British colonial law, Mary presented evidence on the Indian’s behalf, and the court once again found Watson guilty, ordering him to pay a fine and make restitution to the Indian. The judgement, however, could not repair the relationship between the Indians and Watson. Esteechee swore that “his heart would never be streight towards him,”⁴⁰ and other Indians felt the same way. An investigation into Watson’s conduct revealed that he frequently got drunk with the Indians, beat them, and, on at least one other occasion, pointed a loaded gun at an Indian, threatening his life.⁴¹

³⁹Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Jan. 16, 1735, in *OG*, 1:96.

⁴⁰Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Jan. 16, 1735, in *OG*, 1:96.

⁴¹Edward Jenkins to James Oglethorpe, Jan. 20, 1735, *CRG*, 20:185; Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Jan. 16, 1735, in *OG*, 1:97.

The Indians were beyond disgruntled. They had settled in the area exclusively because of Mary, Oglethorpe had promised them that she would be their trader, and the Indians consequently had moved there with their wives and children. They had expected to trade with her but instead had to deal with a violent drunkard who showed them no respect. In coming to the Musgroves' trading post, the Indians "thought to be here and to be civil and kind to one another, but we find the contrary by Watson."⁴² Having the courts pass judgement against the malicious trader was not enough; the Indians requested a substitute. They hoped the magistrates would authorize "another man" to be licensed to trade among them, or even better, they hoped that Mary "Musgrove may trade by her self."⁴³ If Mary had been allowed to solely manage the Musgroves' property from the beginning, the conflict would likely not have arisen, certainly not at least so close to town. But instead, Watson only aggravated the situation.

First, he refused to reconcile his business accounts, which frustrated both Mary and their Charles Town supplier, Samuel Eveleigh. Watson was so neglectful that Eveleigh eventually brought suit, and the court found that Watson was defrauding his supplier, his business partners, and the Indians.⁴⁴ Second, Watson went on a drinking binge that culminated in some serious repercussions, both for himself and for Indian relations in the colony. For close to a month, he holed himself up in his store with Skee,

⁴²Thomas Christie to James Oglethorpe, Dec. 14, 1734, *CRG*, 20:122; Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Jan. 16, 1735, in *OG*, 1:97.

⁴³Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Jan. 16, 1735, in *OG*, 1:97.

⁴⁴Elisha Dobree to the Trustees, Oct. 17, 1734, *CRG*, 20:86; Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Jan. 16, 1735, *CRG*, 20:174.

the Yamacraw militia captain, “drinking every day together in [a] mad way.” After Skee staggered back to the Musgroves’ Cowpen, he became ill, and Watson boasted to all who would listen that “he had done Skee’s business” and predicted that he would die. Most people considered this to be nothing more than drunken talk, but when Skee succumbed to the “rum fever,” people began to take notice. Watson’s comments became even more boastful after news of Skee’s death circulated, claiming that he had drunk the Indian to death. The situation became so alarming that the Savannah bailiff Thomas Causton felt the need to take Watson aside, admonishing him “of the dangers of such Speeches.”⁴⁵

The Indians already had an intense dislike for Watson, and when news of his boasting reached them, they were determined to avenge Skee’s death. Within just a few months of his arrival, Watson had defrauded both his supplier and his business partner, physically attacked his closest neighbor, and incurred the wrath of the Indians to the extent that his own life was in immediate peril. The magistrates moved to curtail his negative influence, recognizing the rights of white, Indians, and mixed-bloods. “In Respect of Eveleigh’s demand, the Indians’ Complaint and Musgrove’s Uneasiness,” the magistrates finally recognized the collective danger posed by Watson and decided it would be best if “he could be persuaded to withdraw from the Stores, Let his affairs be managed by another person . . . and a perfect Inventory be taken.” Watson refused, however, and locked himself in his store. The Indians, led by Esteechee, caught up with him there and broke down the door. In the resulting fray, they killed one of the

⁴⁵Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Jan. 16, 1735, *CRG*, 20:172-74.

Musgroves' servants, and only with Mary's help did Watson escape.⁴⁶ Mary understood the consequences if the Indians were to kill Watson and did her best to prevent that chain of events from unfolding.

For two months the situation went on with the Indians "full of resentment" towards Watson and bent on revenge and Watson defiant and showing no signs of remorse. Mary was sent on more than one occasion to talk with the Indians to curry their patience, reassuring them that if they gave the colonists time, "we would vindicate their rights as much as our own." If she did not resolve the situation entirely, she at least "in Great measure abated their discontent."⁴⁷

Samuel Eveleigh recognized that Causton "had a difficult card to play," and although he believed the bailiff could be fair to all parties involved, he also recognized that it would be "of ill and very dangerous consequence, if he [Watson] should be killed by Indians."⁴⁸ Causton also hoped for some guidance from the Trustees, and the magistrates therefore determined that they should confine Watson under house arrest in town, away from the Indians. This would hopefully appease the Indians, offer the magistrates time to consult with the Trustees, and most important, protect Watson's life, therefore eliminating the cataclysmic result of an Indian war.⁴⁹ The Indians remained

⁴⁶Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Jan. 16, 1735, *CRG*, 20:174; John Musgrove to James Oglethorpe, Jan. 24, 1735, in *OG*, 1:115.

⁴⁷Thomas Christie to James Oglethorpe, Dec. 14, 1734, *CRG*, 20: 122; Edward Jenkins to James Oglethorpe, Jan. 20, 1735, *CRG*, 20:185.

⁴⁸Samuel Eveleigh to James Oglethorpe, Oct. 19, 1734, *CRG*, 20:87.

⁴⁹Thomas Christie to James Oglethorpe, Dec. 14, 1734, *CRG*, 20:122; *EJ*, 72; Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Jan. 16, 1735, *CRG*, 20:172.

resentful but followed proper channels in seeking redress, including petitioning again to have Watson removed from the trade and to have someone else appointed in his stead or allowing Mary to trade exclusively. Causton pacified the Indians by revoking Watson's license and authorizing the Musgroves to "have the sole License to trade with the Indians of Yamacraw, and as far as the Yuchi Indians."⁵⁰ Additionally, he offered presents to Skee's relatives. Tomochichi acknowledged that "some of My people had Misbehaved" by taking matters into their own hands and assured the Trustees that the headmen would confer on appropriate action, but he did advise that Watson "sholld be kept close."⁵¹ All parties concerned had acknowledged the problem and sought some common ground to defuse the volatile situation. Mary was at the center of it not only because of her business connections to Watson, but because she was the only person who could calm the Indians and convince them not only to be patient but also ignore their usual customs and defer to the whites' legal system for redress.

With Watson's license revoked and with him in confinement, the Musgroves could report that the Indians were largely appeased. Given Watson's antics, the court found him unfit to stand trial, "believing him to be Lunatick," and ordered him to remain confined until he regained his senses.⁵² Watson stands as a clear example of the potential

⁵⁰Thomas Christie to James Oglethorpe, Dec. 14, 1734, *CRG*, 20:122; John Musgrove to James Oglethorpe, Jan. 24, 1735, *CRG*, 20:198; Harman Verelst to the Bailiffs and Recorder of Savannah, May 15, 1735, *CRG*, 29:60.

⁵¹*EJ*, 79, March 17, 1735; Tomochichi to the Trustees, Feb. 24, 1735, *CRG*, 20:236.

⁵²John Musgrove to James Oglethorpe, Jan. 24, 1735, *CRG*, 20:197; Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Jan. 6, 1735, in *OG*, 1: 99; *EJ*, 78, March 17, 1735.

one individual could have to negatively influence cultural relations, while at the same time serving to prove that representatives of the various cultures could work together to broker a solution useful for everyone.

Mary was especially recognized for her role in maintaining the friendship of the Indians through all of Watson's shenanigans. She was reimbursed for the loss of her servant, but, more telling, the Trustees offered her an additional cash reward of twenty pounds sterling. The Trustees recognized that Mary's actions among the Indians "greatly contributed to the keeping of the peace with them" and offered the reward "for her Service in preserving the Indians' friendship to us."⁵³ In late 1735, they confirmed a five-hundred acre grant of land promised to Johnny Musgrove for his and his wife's service with the Indians. Treating the couple like any other English colonists, the Trustees decreed that the land would continue to their male heirs and, in the case of Musgrove's death, would be enjoyed by his widow until the children reached the age of majority.⁵⁴

* * * * *

The many services Mary provided the Georgians was no small imposition on the Musgroves nor did they come at little expense. Mary's responsibilities, those of her household coupled with her aid to the Georgians, were huge, especially after Johnny died in June 1735.⁵⁵ Even though the widow was single-handedly responsible for the upkeep

⁵³James Oglethorpe to the Trustees, Dec. 29, 1739, *CRG*, vol. 22, pt. 2:290-91; Thomas Causton to the Trustees, July 25, 1735, *CRG*, 20:451; Harman Verelst to Thomas Causton, May 15, 1735, *CRG*, 29:57; *EJ*, 84, April 30, 1735.

⁵⁴*EJ*, 109, Sept. 24, 1735 and *CRG*, 2:124, Sept. 24, 1735.

⁵⁵Thomas Causton to James Oglethorpe, July 7, 1735, *CRG*, 20:439.

of the most profitable plantation in Georgia, maintaining close ties with her Indian relatives, and keeping a vested interest in the Musgrove trading post, Mary remained dedicated to serving the needs of the colony as well.

With the sole trading license for the immediate territory, Mary consolidated her stores at the Cowpen, closing down Watson's neighboring store.⁵⁶ She continually kept the magistrates informed of the Indians' movements and demeanor, earning the officials' gratitude for "her good offices in Indian affairs on many occasions."⁵⁷ She remained Oglethorpe's official interpreter and thus still frequently traveled to Savannah and into the Creek nation. After Frederica was established, she often traveled there to aid the General, sometimes for weeks, even months, at a time. In 1736, missionaries who had a strong impetus to work among the Indians finally arrived in Georgia, and she spent much of her time aiding them as well.

As Christians, the Musgroves had joined the settlement's "Divine service" from the very first Sunday after Savannah was founded. As always, they had accompanied Tomochichi and a few other headmen to town, and the service piqued the Indians' curiosity. Tomochichi and his wife, Senauki, requested admittance, which was granted, and the other Indians outside "behaved very decently."⁵⁸ Mary's very presence among the Indians proved to have an ameliorating effect on the natives as a representative of the

⁵⁶Thomas Causton to the Trustees, July 25, 1735, in *OG*, 1: 221.

⁵⁷Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Nov. 20, 1735, *CRG*, 21:58; Joseph Cannon to Henry Flitcroft, Nov 8, 1736, in *OG*, 1:285; Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Nov. 26, 1736, *CRG*, 21:276.

⁵⁸*JPG*, 37.

Christian culture. She had been brought up as a Christian, “could read and write” and, according to missionary Benjamin Ingham, “is a well-civilized woman.”⁵⁹ That “civilization” included being baptized and taking the Eucharist. Salzburger leader Boltzius believed that she was “a very good Christian” and helped to spread Christianity among the Indians, giving them “some notions of the Holy Scriptures.” She even accepted the role of godmother, although whether to children of natives or colonists is not clear. Given the general lack of converted Indians in Georgia, however, it is far more likely that it was British parents who trusted Mary to spiritually guide their children and to help them lead a proper Christian life.⁶⁰ That position speaks volumes about the trust they put in her.

From the Indians’ perspective, and from Mary’s own native perspective, she was not betraying her countrymen or her culture by practicing Christianity. We cannot be certain of her level of commitment to the religion, but it does seem at least that she practiced that faith. The Creek culture, however, was polytheistic, and incorporating another god into the pantheon was not considered blasphemous. Native society was inclusive – just as an Indian woman could bring an English trader into the native

⁵⁹Luke Tyerman, ed., *The Oxford Methodists: Memoirs of the Rev. Messrs. Clayton, Ingham, Gambold, Hervey, and Broughton, with Biographical Notices of Others* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1873), 75, Feb. 14, 1736.

⁶⁰Quoted in William C. Sturtevant, “The Misconnection of Guale and Yamassee with Muskogean.” *International Journal of American Linguistics* 60, no. 2 (April 1994), 143, March 19, 1734; *CRG*, 27:173, Aug. 12, 1749.

community, so too could she include a Christian god in her worship.⁶¹ The colonists did not share this inclusive view, but it is clear that they perceived Mary as a legitimate, practicing Christian.

The pious Salzburgers viewed her as a Christian neighbor and welcome visitor to their enclave in Ebenezer. She occasionally visited their school and observed Sunday services with them; their minister Johann Boltzius claimed to have known her well.⁶² Since they desired to learn the Indian language in order to aid in conversion efforts, they had hoped that either Johnny or Mary would be available to teach them.⁶³ But with Johnny's untimely death in 1735, the Salzburgers regretted that they did not have a chance to work with him since they were sure they "could have learned a great deal."⁶⁴ Mary, however, was perceived as having a "special talent for expressing Indian terms in English, a talent not even possessed by her recently dead husband."⁶⁵ Boltzius acknowledged, however, that because she had recently become a widow, she had too

⁶¹Sweet, *Negotiating for Georgia*, 79; Morris, "Gender Roles," 4; Theda Perdue, *"Mixed-Blood" Indians: Racial Constructions in the Early South* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2003), 25.

⁶²*DRS*, 2:126, Aug. 19/20, 1735; *DRS*, 4:34, March 12, 1737.

⁶³*DRS*, 2:29, Dec. 30, 1734

⁶⁴George Fenwick Jones and Paul Martin Peucher, eds., "'We Have Come to Georgia with Pure Intentions': Moravian Bishop August Gottlieb Spangenberg's Letters from Savannah, 1735," *GHQ* 82, no. 1 (Spring 1998):117.

⁶⁵*DRS*, 2:106, July 6, 1735.

many responsibilities to tend to and could not “come and stay with us in Ebenezer for any length of time.”⁶⁶

When missionaries John Wesley and Benjamin Ingham arrived in Savannah in 1736, however, they were closer to Mary’s home, and she could offer them more help. From the very first day the missionaries arrived, Mary was instrumental in bringing them together with the Indians. Mary escorted Tomochichi and a few other Yamacraw representatives to the wharf to meet them upon their arrival. In that first meeting, and most if not all subsequent ones, she also served as interpreter. It was at this conference that Mary translated Tomochichi’s wishes that the missionaries would educate the Yamacraw children and teach them the “great word.” The entire Indian delegation, both men and women, shook hands with the missionaries, a Euroamerican custom perhaps taught to them by Mary. More interestingly, Tomochichi’s wife, Senauki, brought as a present for the missionaries two jars, one of milk and one of honey. The missionaries interpreted the gifts to be symbolic of the Indians’ desires that the missionaries would feed them “with milk, for they were but children” and that “we might be sweet to them.” Another possible interpretation is that Mary had told the Indians of the biblical reference of “the land of milk and honey” and that Senauki hoped to impress the missionaries with the bounties of the American Promised Land.⁶⁷

⁶⁶*DRS*, 2:126, Aug. 19/20, 1735.

⁶⁷*EJ*, 131, Feb. 14, 1736; Tyerman, *Oxford*, 75, Feb. 14, 1736; *JJW*, 159, Feb. 14, 1736.

Just as Oglethorpe employed Mary every time he met with Tomochichi, Wesley called upon her whenever he hoped to speak with the Indian leader. He met with Tomochichi at least four times, and most of those meetings involved a “religious talk.” Mary was present for all of the meetings, and in fact, one of them occurred at her house where she had invited Wesley, Tomochichi, and Senauki to dinner. The Cowpen was just a few miles from Savannah and virtually adjacent to the Yamacraw village, so Wesley frequently walked to Mary’s home. Many times they traveled to the Yamacraw village together, and occasionally they found that Tomochichi was not home. But the time spent with Mary was never wasted, for Wesley found her to be an invaluable source of information and an interesting conversationalist with whom to pass the time. In the twenty-two months he lived in Georgia, including several months-long sabbaticals during which he ministered to the Frederica settlers, his diary noted that he ventured to the Cowpen to meet with Mary more than twenty times. Sometimes they continued on to the Yamacraw village or the Irene schoolhouse from there; they often stayed at her home and talked. Wesley’s meticulous but abbreviated notes usually describe how he spent his time in conversation with her, whether they spent the afternoon having a “useful” or a “religious” talk. Both point to Mary’s importance as a cultural broker. We do not know the specific content of their conversations, but Mary certainly provided vital information regarding the Indians’ beliefs, their feelings about conversion in general, and their demeanor regarding the missionaries in particular. Once the Irene school began, she

likely kept Wesley updated on the Indians' views on its success as well.⁶⁸ As a Christian, Mary may have appreciated the minister's counsel during their "religious talks" and certainly benefitted from the knowledge of Christianity she could share with the natives by conferring with this impressively religious man. The frequency of Wesley's visits to the Cowpen during the months when he was stationed at Savannah clearly indicate his high regard for her and the role she played in connecting him with the natives.

Wesley visited with Mary when he could, but it was Ingham who devised a plan to fully use her mediating abilities. He took up residence at the Cowpen and studied with her, learning the Indians' language as well as some of their cultural and religious beliefs.⁶⁹ After months of tutelage, he moved forward with plans to open the Irene schoolhouse for the Yamacraws, having Mary help to select a site and certainly providing other valuable assistance as well. When he secured Tomochichi's permission to educate the chief's nephew Toonahowi, there is no question that Mary handled the negotiations

⁶⁸One part of Wesley's journal is nothing more than a listing of his days' schedule, with the hours listed and short notes on the day's events alongside. A typical section can be found in this example from April 30, 1726: "12:15 set out with Ingham (strong tide against us), religious talk. 3:30 Mrs Musgrove's, she and Miss Fawset in the woods, found them. 4:00 religious talk with Tomochichi, religious talk with Miss Fawset (she affected.) 5:00 necessary talk; tea. 5:30 set out." *WJW*, 18:381. For meetings with Musgrove (including ones with Tomochichi), see *WJW*, 18:359d, 367d, 380d, 381d, 382d, 400d, 426d, 439d, 446d, 447d, 449d, 450d, 454d, 457d, 459d, 467d, 470d, 471d, 473d, 527d, Feb. 19, March 9, April 26, April 29, April 30, May 4, July 8, Sept. 27, Oct. 31, Nov. 9, Nov. 17, Nov. 23, Nov. 25, Dec. 9, Dec 23, Dec 28, 1736, Jan. 25, Feb. 6, Feb. 8, Feb. 9, Feb. 14, July 12, 1737.

⁶⁹Tyerman, *Oxford Methodists*, 80, Apr. 25, 1736; *JJW*, 168, Feb. 25, 1736; *CRG*, 21:77, Feb. 27, 1736; Fries, *Moravians*, 149.

and helped to outline the parameters of the arrangement.⁷⁰ When the missionaries established their own residence in the Yamacraw village in which to teach the Indian children, Wesley acknowledged that the “chief merit of the site was its nearness to Mrs. Musgrove and the Creek Indians.” The missionaries understood that Mary was a vital component that could make their venture a success.⁷¹ The reality that the school ultimately failed is much more a reflection on the missionaries and their lack of commitment than the brokering efforts of Mary Musgrove.

Although the missionaries, especially Wesley, did not take full advantage of the opportunities Mary provided, she did everything in her power to bridge the two cultures and provided the missionaries with an entrance to spread their faith among the Indians. By her own practice of Christianity, she introduced the religion to the natives and cultivated their curiosity. She led by her personal example and explained Christian beliefs and rituals to the natives while also serving as godmother to protect the spirituality of English youngsters. She also actively worked to make the missionaries successful in their introduction to the Indian language and culture and in their pedagogical efforts so that they could introduce Euroamerican culture to the next generation of Yamacraw Indians.

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⁷⁰*EJ*, 308, July 20, 1737; Fries, *Moravians*, 152; Tyerman, *Oxford Methodists*, 80, April 20, 1736.

⁷¹Curnock, *Journal of Wesley*, 168, Feb. 25, 1736; Fries, *Moravians*, 131; Margaret Szasz, *Indian Education in the American Colonies, 1607-1783* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), 162.

Tasks that helped to teach the missionaries the Indian language and educate them on native culture were just additional responsibilities that Mary added to her usual chores. Boltzius had observed the widow's hectic schedule and heavy load of responsibilities. Since Johnny Musgrove's death in June 1735, Mary had also lost the last of her four sons, all of whom died in childhood. John Wesley officiated over the service for their last son, Ned, in November 1736. The service serves as another indication of the importance of Christian rituals to Mary.⁷² With no husband and no children, Mary, like any colonial widow, was in a precarious situation. She was allowed the use of Musgrove's property, but trying to maintain the farm and business would have been difficult for any lone person, especially a woman with reduced legal rights, an Indian woman facing possible legal prejudices of the day, and someone constantly called upon to be absent in order to aid Oglethorpe and the colony. Sharing a situation typical of most colonial women, Mary would be more secure in her financial holdings as a married woman, even if that meant sharing her wealth with a new husband. To that end, she married again in March 1737.⁷³

Her selection of Jacob Matthews as spousal material seemed an odd choice to many of her contemporaries. As a former indentured servant of the Musgroves, he seemed to belong to a lower class than that of the powerful, wealthy, and well-connected Mary.⁷⁴ But Matthews had a history of service among the Indians and was a captain of a

⁷²*JJW*, 297, Nov. 23, 1736; *WJW*, 18:449d, Nov. 23, 1736.

⁷³*DRS*, 4:33-34, March 12, 1737.

⁷⁴*CRG*, 4:517, Feb. 20, 1740; *CRG*, vol. 4, pt. 2:217, Aug. 13, 1741; William Stephens to Harman Verelst, Feb. 4, 1742, *CRG*, 23:218.

company of rangers.⁷⁵ Unions between military officers and Indian women often resulted in fortuitous benefits for both sides, and the Matthews made the partnership work, continuing farming, trading, and working to preserve Georgia's Indian relations together.

In the years leading up to the start of the War of Jenkins's Ear in 1739, the couple did their best to maintain Georgia's good relations with the Yamacraws and Creeks, especially as the Spanish made more efforts to woo them. Though Matthews was not of mixed-blood descent nor a trader like Musgrove, he was a sociable fellow with whom the Indians got along well. His military service meant that he had frequently scouted with the Indians, and he had earned their respect and friendship. Mary, of course, continued to be held in "great esteem" by both the Indians and General Oglethorpe. According to Stephens, the General asked for her guidance "in many things, for his better dealing with the Indians," and he continued to employ her as his official interpreter throughout the war. Stephens appreciated that "she has a very great influence upon many of them [the Indians] particularly the Creek nation" and frequently made use of her brokering skills in Savannah.⁷⁶ Her services were so vital to Indian relations that Oglethorpe frequently called her to Frederica as well. In May 1739, for instance, Colonel William Horton visited her "to commune on some important matters relating to our neighbors Indians of Tomochichi's Tribe." The Yamacraws seemed determined to send out raids against the Spanish, but war between England and Spain had not yet officially been declared. Since

⁷⁵George Dunbar to James Oglethorpe, Jan. 23, 1735, *CRG*, 20:192; Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Feb. 19, 1741, in *OG*, 2:563; *CRG*, 5:485, March 30, 1741; James Oglethorpe to Jacob Matthews, Oct. 3, 1740, *CRG*, 27:1.

⁷⁶*CRG*, 4:517, Feb. 20, 1740; *CRG*, vol 4, pt. 2:160, June 6, 1741.

the Yamacraws were so closely allied with the Georgians, their forays would be seen as a violation of the peace. “This therefore being a thing of great Moment,” Oglethorpe wished to see Mary at the fort so that she could use her “great influence” and persuade the Indians to abandon their plans. The General hoped that both Mary and her husband would join him at Frederica, and the couple promised that they would as soon as they could get their affairs in order, ready to do “whatever he required of them.”⁷⁷

When the Matthews were at home, they continued the Musgroves’ hospitable ways, often opening their home to whites and Indians alike. In celebration of their fifth anniversary, “several boats well filled with people, went up” to the Cowpen to help them celebrate. On another occasion, a large group of townspeople had ventured to the Cowpen “on invitation from Matthews” and had stayed “two or three days and nights” drinking and having fun.⁷⁸ The Indians, as well, were always welcome. The trading post certainly attracted many customers, but in addition, the friendship and services provided by the Matthews meant that the Indians “daily flocked around their house.” There is little doubt that for people hoping to find a hospitable, friendly outpost that served as a cultural crossroads, the Cowpen was the place to be. Not all Georgians approved of the frivolity; Savannah magistrates were worried that the Matthews imported rum into Georgia illegally, and the pious sects were concerned about the moral repercussions of such a place. One of Boltzius’ parishioners had reported that he has gone to the Cowpen for supplies but was horrified to discover there “some Indians and white people of both

⁷⁷*CRG*, 4:327-28, May 1-2, 1739, 463, Dec. 3, 1739.

⁷⁸*JWS*, 1:53, March 15, 1742; *CRG*, 4:517, Feb. 20, 1740.

sexes jumping around in the hut in a shameful manner as if they were entirely mad.” For the Salzburgers, this dancing was an “unheard of disgrace,” but for the Matthews and their friends and neighbors who visited them, it was a happily familiar occurrence.⁷⁹

By the time the War of Jenkins’s Ear officially began, Mary had set up another trading post at the forks of the Altamaha River. This post, called Mount Venture, was established at Oglethorpe’s request and was strategically located on the frontier to allow Mary to keep a watchful eye on the Spaniards, to provide an English presence on the southwestern edge of the colony, and to draw Creek allies to the area to help provide defense. The post included a small fort garrisoned by a few rangers and commanded by her military husband.⁸⁰

When Oglethorpe invaded Spanish Florida in 1740, Mary recruited Indian allies and sent them to serve with the general. In addition to the faithful Yamacraw contingent, Mary recruited some Lower Creek warriors, including near-relations such as her brother, Edward Griffin. Jacob Matthews served as well, sometimes conducting the Indian troops. At Fort Picolleta, he along with Thomas Jones and William Gray led the Indians

⁷⁹*CRG*, vol. 4 pt. 2:217, Aug. 13, 1741; Harman Verelst to James Oglethorpe, Dec. 14, 1741, *CRG*, 30:224; *DRS*, 4:187, Oct. 31, 1737.

⁸⁰Mr. Jones to Harman Verelst, Feb. 23, 1739, *CRG*, vol. 22, pt. 2:88; Thomas Causton to the Trustees, Feb. 19, 1741, in *OG*, 2:563; James Oglethorpe to William Stephens, Feb. 2, 1740, in *OG*, 2:451; *CRG*, 4: 511, Feb 13, 1740; *CRG*, vol. 4, pt. 2: April 18, 1741; *CRG*, 5:485, March 30, 741. The post was established in either 1736 or 1737. See A Statement of Mrs. Bosomworth’s Case, June 27, 1760, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 1:257.

in a diversionary tactic that ultimately allowed the English to take the fort. At the Battle of Fort Mosa, Griffin was one of the casualties.⁸¹

While Jacob and the Indian allies were fighting with Oglethorpe's army, Mary was working to keep Indian relations favorable within the colony, continually recruiting more allies for the Florida campaigns and managing both the Cowpen and Mount Venture. A steady stream of Indian warriors passed from the Indian nations to the Matthews's, where they stayed for a few days and rested before continuing on to Oglethorpe in Frederica or Florida. During the peaks of the fighting, Colonel Horton almost had a continual loop of periaguas traveling from Frederica to the Cowpen in order to shuttle the warriors on the last leg of their journey. Even on the short notice of a feared Spanish attack, Mary was able to raise forty warriors and brought them to Frederica herself.⁸² Nor were these only local Indians; the Matthews's recruited and played host to Yuchis, Chickasaws, and Cherokees in addition to Yamacraws and Creeks.⁸³

Receiving and conducting war parties to the general was highly important, but so, too, was providing a welcoming reception for headmen and leaders of delegations coming to town for conferences. Mary hosted these as well. Savannah had public buildings set aside for housing and meeting with visiting Indian emissaries, yet the

⁸¹Mark Carr to James Campbell, Jan 28, 1740, in *OG*, 2:448; James Oglethorpe to William Stephens, Feb. 1, 1740, *CRG*, vol. 22, pt. 2:314; James Oglethorpe to Egmont, Jan. 25, 1741, in *OG*, 2:536.

⁸²William Horton to Mary Musgrove, June 13, 1744, *CRG*, 27:6.

⁸³*CRG*, 4:553, April 13, 1740; *CRG*, 4:585, June 2, 1740; Mr. Jones to Harman Verelst, Oct. 6, 1740, *CRG*, vol. 22, pt. 2:427; *JWS*, 2:1, Aug. 1, 1743.

magistrates still relied on the Matthewses to house and provide for the Indians the majority of the time. While meetings in town usually lasted a few days, the delegations usually stayed at the Cowpen for weeks at a time, both coming and going.⁸⁴ Among the native leaders who enjoyed her hospitality was Malatchi, who being close kin, visited her regularly. Creek headmen from other towns, such as the Wolf of Muccaolossus, also enjoyed her hospitality.⁸⁵ Mary retained her strong influence among both the Upper and Lower Creeks and was frequently instrumental in persuading native policy to favor the British instead of other European nations. In 1741, she opened her home for a conference with the Upper Creek headmen and the Savannah magistrates to “give mutual assurances of our Friendship to each other.” The next year, when Chigelli remained hesitant to abandon the Creeks’ traditional neutrality and commit to sending warriors to join the English, Mary invited Malatchi to Frederica to meet with Oglethorpe. As a Creek, she knew that no mico, including Chigelli, held absolute authority and also understood that Malatchi, as Chigelli’s nephew and successor, would become an important leader and could influence the Creek warriors to join Oglethorpe, two very important reasons to gain him as an ally. After meeting with Oglethorpe, Malatchi visited with Mary at the Cowpen for a few days before returning to Coweta to use his influence to secure more warriors for the Georgia campaigns. Two years later, Colonel Horton asked Mary to talk with Chigelli and Malatchi to counteract French inroads and to send down more war

⁸⁴*CRG*, 4:585, June 2, 1740.

⁸⁵*CRG*, vol. 4, pt. 2:158, 160, June 5, 6, 1741.

parties. She was successful.⁸⁶ The meager Georgia military was clearly dependent upon Mary to recruit native warriors and to maintain the Creek alliance.

So during the dangers of wartime, Mary consistently kept the Indians near town appeased and calm, the powerful leaders of the Creek nation in alliance with the British, and a steady stream of warriors from a variety of southeastern nations joining the general in his campaigns against Spain. As Oglethorpe's top aide, she was frequently in camp at Frederica or escorting Indians there. Whenever a new group of native warriors arrived, Oglethorpe requested her presence to "assist him in conversing with the Indians." This assistance often required her presence in Frederica for months at a time.⁸⁷ Even after Oglethorpe had returned to England, Mary's skills remained vital to the military operation. In March 1744, Colonel Horton wrote from Frederica to request that she "reside among them there as usual as an interpreter." When a drunken colonist stirred up trouble among the Indians near Frederica in September, Horton asked Mary to come and pacify the situation. He understood the extent of her abilities, for "the sooner I have the pleasure of seeing you the better it will be for the publick service."⁸⁸ Her presence in Frederica was not just a favor to the English; she also served the natives, who had "great confidence" in her.⁸⁹ That confidence extended to her work in Savannah. When

⁸⁶CRG, 4:566, 567, May 3, 4, 1740; Hahn, *Invention of the Creek Nation*, 197; CRG, 27:249, Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 113.

⁸⁷CRG, vol. 4, pt. 2:163, June 10, 1741; JWS, 1:187, 188, March 30, 31, 1743; JWS, 2:103, 116, May 17, June 23, 1744.

⁸⁸William Horton to Mary Bosomworth, Sept. 21, 1744, CRG, 27:8.

⁸⁹JWS, 2:80, March 12, 1744.

disagreements occurred or the Indians were impassioned over something, the town magistrates always called on Mary, who was the only one “who knows how to prevail with them.” Whether in Savannah, Frederica, or among the Indian nations, Mary consistently worked to “keep peace and good order with the Indians.”⁹⁰

In the midst of all this traveling, working, and trading, Mary was also caring for an ailing husband. Jacob Matthews had taken so ill in 1741 that he had temporarily “lost the use of his limbs.” Although he recovered for a time, he succumbed to fever and died in June 1742.⁹¹ In the last few months of his illness, the Mathewses had retired to the Cowpen, leaving Mount Venture in the care of a handful of rangers.⁹² More bad news arrived in November, when accounts of the Spanish-allied Indians attacking the outpost reached Savannah. The garrison was either captured or killed and the post destroyed. This was a considerable financial blow to Mary, who had already sacrificed much for the good of the colony. Between entertaining Indians at the Cowpen, recruiting warriors, donating food, and the loss of the trading post and all of its goods at Mount Venture, Mary calculated her losses during the war at almost £6,000.⁹³

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⁹⁰*JWS*, 2:18, Sept. 16, 1743; Harman Verelst to William Stephens June 11, 1742, *CRG*, 30:247.

⁹¹*CRG*, 5:485, March 30, 1741; *CRG*, vol. 4, pt. 2:103, March 12, 1741; John Fallowfield to the Trustees, July 27, 1742, in *OG*, 2:642; *JWS*, 1:90-91, June 6, 1742.

⁹²Thomas Jones to the Trustees' Accountant, *CRG*, 23: 329, May 6, 1742; *JWS*, 1:89, June 5, 1742.

⁹³John Dobell to the Trustees, Nov. 30, 1742, *CRG*, 23:437; Fisher, “Mary Musgrove,” 143.

In 1744, Mary found herself in a uncertain position. Her finances were not in good order, she had creditors looking for repayment, and she was a widow once again. In addition to losing her husband, Mary also lost her leading English champion, James Oglethorpe, who had left the colony the previous year, never to return. Upon his departure, he had given her £200 sterling as partial payment for her interpreter salary and promised additional future payments. But with the War of Jenkins' Ear basically over and relations with the Indians calm, the Georgia magistrates began to believe that there "was the less need of her among the Indians" and were not inclined to pay her any more money.⁹⁴ Her worrisome financial burden is likely one of the reasons she found it necessary to remarry again, though news of her marriage to the Rev. Thomas Bosomworth in July 1744 greatly surprised her Savannah neighbors.⁹⁵ Their marriage, however, did not prevent Mary from working to mediate relations with the Indians, and she continued to serve both at Savannah and at Frederica as the war wound down.⁹⁶

With the war over, Mount Venture destroyed, and Oglethorpe gone, the requirement for Mary to travel was significantly reduced. She remained vital to influencing Anglo-native relations, but with the Spanish conflict over, she was able to focus more on her business and her own personal affairs. To that end, Mary worked to get her finances in order and to legitimize her property holdings. During her marriage to Johnny Musgrove, she had acquired extensive holdings in South Carolina, the Cowpen's

⁹⁴A Statement of Mrs. Bosomworth's case, July 27, 1760, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 1: 263; Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 110, *JWS*, 1:232, July 29, 1743.

⁹⁵*JWS*, 2:127, 131, 132, July 21, August 6, 7, 1744.

⁹⁶*JWS*, 2: 149, 151, 164, 234, Sept 24, 30, Nov. 4, 1744, Aug. 1, 1745.

five-hundred acre grant in Georgia, and a town lot and house in Savannah. By 1736, however, her husband and children had all died, and according to early trustee regulations, Mary, as the widow, could use the property during her lifetime but did not inherit it. She thus did not own it nor could she lease or sell the land. She therefore petitioned the board in 1737 to request that she be allowed to “appoint a successor to her lot” and to sell some lands to pay off her debts. Mary tried to work within the accepted English legal parameters to improve her standing and to secure title to her extensive property. She fully understood her rights and limitations as an Englishwoman and also abided by the prescribed means of seeking redress. Recognizing Mary’s “usefulness” in Indian affairs and appreciating her formal proper petition, the Trustees granted her request.⁹⁷

That same year, Tomochichi added to Mary’s impressive landholdings by making her a grant of the Yamacraw lands, an area of two- or three-hundred acres. William Stephens witnessed the transaction and reported it to the Trustees matter-of-factly. For someone who usually interjected his opinions when he felt something was amiss, Stephens raised no objections at the time to the propriety or legality of this transaction. From the viewpoints of Tomochichi and Mary, those lands had been reserved for the Yamacraws and they could do with them as they saw fit; transferring the title from Indian to Indian was not problematic. Adding to the validity of the transfer, four Creek chiefs

⁹⁷*EJ*, 291-292, July 20, 1737; Fisher, “Mary Musgrove,” 109-110.

confirmed the transaction in October 1738. Present at this event was Oglethorpe, who by his silence added his approval as well.⁹⁸

The Trustees' laws changed in 1739 in a way that would favorably benefit Mary and other females in the colony: women could now inherit property. In 1740, the limitations placed on property holdings were increased from five-hundred acres to two-thousand. Both of these new laws helped to legitimize Mary's claims and to allow her the flexibility to use her land to her benefit.⁹⁹ Knowing that the Indian lands granted to her as an Indian needed to be legitimized in the English legal system in order to be validated by whites as well, Mary sent another petition to the Trustees in 1741. She hoped to have them validate Tomochichi's land grant and acknowledge payment due for her annual salary as Oglethorpe's official interpreter. The Trustees' ruling on the matter indicated that they had little problem with Mary having title to the land, but that for the sake of appearances, Oglethorpe needed to first obtain a cession from the Creeks to the Trustees, who would then grant the land to the Matthews.¹⁰⁰ Oglethorpe, busy preparing for the Spanish invasion of Georgia at the time, did not secure the requisite title transfer. In the wake of Jacob's death and Mary's subsequent marriage to Bosomworth, they sent another petition to the Trustees. She was still hoping to find some redress for her missing salary, replaced Matthews with Bosomworth as her co-grantee, and added

⁹⁸Fisher, "Mary Musgrove," 119.

⁹⁹Fisher, "Mary Musgrove," 122.

¹⁰⁰Fisher, "Mary Musgrove," 136; *CRG*, 4:86-87; Harman Verelst to James Oglethorpe, Feb. 16, 1742, *CRG*, 30:234; Harman Verelst to William Stephens, June 11, 1742, *CRG*, 30:247.

claims for food bounties raised on Mary's farm and given to the colonists in 1739 and 1742.¹⁰¹ Significantly, Mary followed the letter of the law and secured the depositions of two freeholder witnesses to verify her bounty claims. She may have been a Creek beloved woman who could speak in the councils of her native kinsmen, but as an Englishwoman, she knew that her position was best served by following the legal protocol required of all English colonists.

In the meantime, the Bosomworths released some cattle on one of the Georgia sea islands called St. Catherine's to increase their stock. This island and two others – Sapelo and Ossabaw – had been reserved for the Indians' use in the treaties of 1735 and 1739.¹⁰² As an Indian, Mary had rights to its use, and Thomas, as an Englishman, had requested permission from Stephens and received no objection.¹⁰³ As their cattle stock grew, Thomas built a house on the island. Mary hoped to secure a more legitimate title to the land, and Malatchi therefore traveled to Frederica to meet with Colonel Heron in December 1747. There he reconfirmed Mary's kinship connection to the Creeks as well as her rights to Indian land. He followed this declaration by granting her a deed to the three sea islands in January 1748.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹CRG, 1:487-88, May 19, 1746; For the Trustees' response to the salary and bounties portions only, see Harman Verelst to William Stephens, July 25, 1746, CRG, 31:44-45.

¹⁰²Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 91, 101.

¹⁰³Benjamin Martyn to William Stephens, July 17, 1747, CRG, 31:79.

¹⁰⁴Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 125; Fisher, "Mary Musgrove," 194-95.

Beyond questioning the validity of Mary's claims to the Yamacraw lands and the sea islands, the Trustees did not directly address the issue throughout the 1740s. The trouble of overseas communication, the slowness of colonial bureaucracy, and concern over offending such an influential Creek mediator meant that Mary's petitions went unanswered – not denied, just ignored. Mary became more insistent and better documented her case as the decade wore on. Her new husband may have encouraged her, and as her spouse he certainly stood to gain significantly, but Mary hardly needed persuading to pursue her legitimate claims. Nothing about Mary's history or character indicates that she could be easily manipulated by a male figure in her life. Bosomworth was not the menacing influence who turned Mary against the colonists, as some historians have claimed.¹⁰⁵ She did not stop looking out for the colony's best interest once married to Bosomworth; the marriage coincided with a time when she was looking out for her own welfare as well. Mary had long shown interest in pursuing her claims that would legitimize her as both an Indian and an Englishwoman and never proved to be anyone's fool or easily manipulated. Many of the documents may have been drawn up by her husband's hand using English legal language to further ensure their legitimacy, but it cannot therefore be assumed that it was all his self-serving machinations or manipulation of Mary's desires. Furthermore, she was within her rights to pursue the land claims and to ask for recompense for the services she had abundantly provided the colony. Historian Helen Todd's criticism that Mary was "a double-dealing trouble-maker

¹⁰⁵Coleman, 84; Todd, *Tomochichi*, 142; Coulter, "Queen," 11. Even some of the more fair historians have stated that Mary made her claims "under the tutelage of her husband" and "guided by Thomas." See Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 115.

who put self-interest above everything else” is severely misplaced. Even recent historians have charged that Mary was looking to “line her own pockets,” but they do not offer a fair assessment.¹⁰⁶ Mary’s financial sacrifices on behalf of the colony were well documented; in addition, she was more than fair in ascertaining what was due her, being sure to credit the colony with the £200 Oglethorpe had given her upon his departure. She also erred on the side of under-reporting, not including incalculable losses such as the time and labor spent by her hunters providing meat for the settlers – and the subsequent loss of deerskins for Mary’s business, the loss of her cattle stock when Oglethorpe drafted her cowkeeper into service, and the general neglect her personal affairs suffered while she was serving the public.¹⁰⁷ The modest petitions were not demands of a money-hungry opportunist, but rather requests of a legitimate business woman who understood the legal and cultural principles and procedures of the two outlines of both of the cultures to which she belonged.

The issue came to a head in Savannah in August 1749. The debacle that occurred when loyal Creek kinsmen supportive of Mary’s claims came into town and encountered defensive and paranoid magistrates has been well outlined before and thus bears not repeating in detail here.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶Todd, *Tomochichi*, 142; Sweet, *Negotiating for Georgia*, 160.

¹⁰⁷A Statement of Mrs. Bosomworth’s account of her services performed, sums disbursed, and sums received, while serving Georgia, June 27, 1760, *CRG*, vol. 28, pt. 1:265.

¹⁰⁸See Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, ch. 7; Sweet, *Negotiating for Georgia*, ch. 10; Fisher, “Mary Musgrove,” ch. 5.

What most of these analyses miss, however, is that the magistrates' grudge was not technically against Mary's rights, as an Indian, to receive title to Indian lands given by Indian chiefs. Rather the concern stemmed from other issues that arose because of her success and influence as a cultural broker. The threat posed by Mary's land claims was threefold. First, the size of the claim, when added to her already significant holdings, greatly exceeded the limits imposed by the Trustees. Their original plan was one of equitable land distribution, and they shared a vision of the honest poor working their small plots of land to secure their own livelihood. Large accumulations were to be forbidden so that no one individual or family could garner excessive power or wealth. Mary's possession of various land tracts throughout South Carolina and Georgia already threatened that principle, and granting her additional lands would only augment her wealth, power, and prestige. Second, Mary's acquisition of the Indian lands set a dangerous precedent. From the magistrates' perspective, Mary and her husband were subjects of the king; if they could secure a grant of land from the Indians, other colonists could theoretically force or deceive Indians into ceding them land as well. From the Creeks' perspective, Mary's land title was an internal matter – an Indian-to-Indian exchange, but the magistrates did not view it that way and, more important, were concerned that other colonists would not either. Such fraudulent land claims would result in chaotic land distribution and competing claims and would jeopardize Indian relations. Finally, the presence of Mary's husband must be entered into the equation. Thomas was a full-blooded Englishman, and according to the English laws of the time, any of Mary's property automatically became his. The magistrates were probably not happy that Mary

was asserting her Indian rights to the lands, but because she was inextricably tied up with Thomas, they could not validate the land claim. A grant to Mary, legitimate or not, meant a grant to Thomas; according to English law, they could not separate the two.

Mary was in this predicament precisely because she so successfully bridged the two cultures. Being both a daughter and a wife of an Englishman, she had strong patriarchal ties to English society. Following the protocol of that culture, she pursued the correct legal channels to petition for redress and she understood that her property would belong to her husband, making him the grantee in each of her petitions. She had lived her life among the English so successfully as a member of their society, that they viewed her as an Englishwoman. For their part, the Creeks equally believed her to be one of their own and did not understand why there was an issue with her use of Indian lands. Successfully bridging both societies, Mary was not marginalized in any way, but fully accepted by both societies as a legitimate member.

Mary understood the rights that came with membership in each society. She knew that because of her kinship connections and status as a Creek beloved woman, she had legitimate claims to Indian land. She also knew that she could pursue legal action as an Englishwoman, but that her “Englishness” also weakened her argument for her claims to the Indian lands. When confronted in Savannah then and forced to choose which side she most closely identified herself with, she chose the Creeks. The magistrates were stunned, having fully expected her to state that she was a subject of the English crown, for indeed, that is how they viewed her. One magistrate, so stunned by her rejection of her paternal line, retorted “Madam if I had told you so, you would have spit in my

face.”¹⁰⁹ Mary likely would not have taken that uncouth approach, but the sentiment was well understood: she would have taken offense to any colonist suggesting that she was not an Englishwoman. It was not up to him to ascribe to Mary her identity. Native, European, or a combination – the decision of which cultural values to embrace was hers to make. But clearly, both the natives and the newcomers believed that Mary was a part of their culture – she belonged to the Creeks, she belonged to the English, and she was fully accepted by each society as one of their own.

Even with the controversy increasing tensions between Mary and the Savannah magistrates, Mary continued working to mediate Georgia’s relations with the Indians. She was central to the connection between the Georgians and the native populations and as such did not neglect the services she could provide to each cultures. Nor were the Englishmen tempted to abandon her or her services just because of a legal matter. Although the magistrates were irritated by the trouble and work that arose by her pressing her land claims, Mary was not marginalized in the wake of the controversy. In general, she was well respected by both sides, and despite the legal battles and her own advancing age, she remained a central character in Anglo-native relations while the courts tried to find a solution to the legal issues.

In the Spring of 1747, Colonel Horton asked Mary to use her influence to counteract the inroads of the French and Spanish. Malatchi and Chigelli were entertaining the idea of receiving French traders, but Mary used her influence and convinced them otherwise. It was only “by her Interest and authority amongst them [the

¹⁰⁹A narrative of the Bosomworth Affair, August 12, 1749, *CRG*, 27:174.

Creeks that] Countermined every intended design of his Majesty's Enemies the French ... in Alienating the Creek Indians from the British interest." She even took £300 worth of goods from her own stores to disperse among the Indians as presents in order to maintain their friendship.¹¹⁰ When Mary traveled to the Creek nation in 1750, a journey that took place after Mary and Stephens's public fight in August 1749, she continued to counteract the French forays. In Coweta, the natives had openly received French diplomats and were flying French flags in the square. Stephens knew that the Lower Creeks had recently gone to Mobile and had "returned very well pleased from the French." The trader George Galphin reported that most of the Creek Indians at that time were "very much in the French interest," despite his best attempts to keep them allied with the English. Mary, however, reassured the Creeks that the English deserved their alliance and convinced them to take down the French colors.¹¹¹

While the legal debate continued and the Bosomworth petitions went largely unanswered, the South Carolina government found itself in need of a mediator to negotiate problems between the Creeks, the Cherokees, and the English. A group of Cherokees who had been visiting the governor in March 1752 were ambushed by some Creek warriors on the outskirts of Charles Town. Since the Cherokees were ostensibly under English protection at the time, Governor James Glen could not ignore the murders.

¹¹⁰Corkran, *Creek Frontier*, 123; Extract of a Journal from a person lately come from the Creek nation, April 11, 1747, *CRG*, 27:12; Memorial of Mr. Bosomworth and wife, read Nov. 26, 1754, *CRG*, 26:483.

¹¹¹William Stephens to Benjamin Martin, July 29, 1750, *CRG*, 26:43; Deposition of Adam Bosomworth, Oct. 2, 1750, *CRG*, 27:18-20.

He needed to demand restitution, but he could not find anyone willing to travel into the Creek nation to relay his requirements. Thomas and Mary agreed to go, traveling to Coweta in July. There they not only relayed the governor's message, but when the chiefs balked at the demands, Mary was able to convince them that the Creek headmen needed to kill the perpetrator in order to restore good relations with the British.¹¹² When they returned to Georgia months later and still had no decision from the Trustees regarding their claims, they decided to travel to England themselves and to present their case in person.

The Bosomworths' memorial was considered in October and November 1754, but the Board referred the case to the Attorney General. Another year would pass before he ruled that title claims were "a matter of Right that must be tried by a jury." Thus a conclusion was put off again.¹¹³ No jury was ever convened, however, and finally, in July 1759, the king and counsel made the long-awaited ruling on the Bosomworths' title claims: they were denied. The decision was not surprising, given the length of time that had passed and the dangerous precedent that a favorable finding would set for future land claims. Thomas Bosomworth, present to hear the verdict, hardly even seemed surprised,

¹¹²Hahn, *Invention of the Creek Nation*, 210-216; Extract of a letter from the Assistants in Georgia to Mr. Martin, July 28, 1752, *CRG*, 26:404; Governor James Glen to the Upper Creek Nation, April 28, 1752, *DRIA* (1750-54), 210-212; Journal of Thomas Bosomworth as Agent to and in the Creek Nation, July 1752, *DRIA* (1750-1754), 276, 279.

¹¹³Memorial and Representation of Coosaponakeesa, Oct. 1754, *CRG* 26: 466-477; Memorial of Mr. Bosomworth and wife, read Nov. 11, 1754, *CRG*, 26:477-485; *CRG*, 7:274, Oct. 17, 1755.

acknowledging that if “it was his Royal Will to disallow” the claim, it was “his Duty to submit, and he did so.”¹¹⁴

Three weeks later, however, Governor Henry Ellis of Georgia made a surprising concession. Although the Bosomworth controversy had been officially decided, Ellis offered them a compromise. Georgia would grant them title to St. Catharine’s Island, and the other two islands would be sold. From the profits of the land auction, Georgia would pay Mary £2,100 sterling in consideration of “the great Losses she had sustained, and the Sums of Money she had advanced at different Times for his Majesty’s Service.” In reaching that decision, the board “had seriously considered the many Years of Services” that Mary had provided the colony, including her skills as an interpreter. When the deed was entered in the books, the grant for St. Catharine’s was given to “Mrs. Bosomworth and her Heirs...in consideration of public Services by her performed and executed.”¹¹⁵ This was more than an acknowledgment of her importance to Indian relations, it was an admission of the validity of her claims and proof that the Georgians of the time did not believe she had betrayed the colony by asserting them. She was not scorned in the aftermath of the controversy, but instead was still considered to be a viable mediator and a friend to the colony.

As further evidence of her continued good standing in the community and her willingness to continue to broker relations between the natives and the colonists, Mary

¹¹⁴*CRG*, 8:84-85, July 3, 1759.

¹¹⁵*CRG*, 8:85-86, July 23, 1759; 87, July 24, 1759; 204-205, Dec., 1759; 323, June 13, 1760.

was called upon, and accepted the duty, several times in the final years of her life. The most serious Indian threat in Georgia during the time was the Cherokee War in 1760-1761. In this conflict, Mary was critical in keeping the Creeks neutral.¹¹⁶ As Georgia braced for war with the Cherokees, rumors abounded that the Creeks had joined in league with them. Mary was the one who alerted the Indians that they had fallen under suspicion. For their part, the Creeks were disgruntled in the wake of Superintendent Edmund Atkin's new policies, but Mary assured them that a conference with the governor to address their concerns was preferable to war. In this tense situation, Mary secured Ellis's permission to escort the Creek headmen to town in order to meet with him. The Creeks arrived in October and, with Mary present, enumerated the "causes of their dissatisfaction" but pledged that they would never have "any ill design against the English."¹¹⁷

The following spring, Creek warriors arrived in Savannah to present the governor with Cherokee scalps as a sign of their loyalty to the English. Ellis accepted the tokens but delayed the meeting until Mary could arrive to mediate. At that time, Mary not only interpreted but also helped to distribute presents to the Indians.¹¹⁸ When the unthinkable happened that May and some of the French faction among the Creeks killed their English traders, the colonial government turned to Mary again. When news of the killings arrived in Savannah, the governor drew up a letter to address the headmen of the Creek nation.

¹¹⁶Edward J. Cashin, *Governor Henry Ellis and the Transformation of British North America* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press), 94.

¹¹⁷CRG, 8:160-165, Oct. 10, 1759.

¹¹⁸CRG, 8:284, April 14, 1760; 285-86, April 17, 1760; 292-94, April 28, 1760.

He sent one copy back with a visiting chief and sent another copy to Mary for her to forward to the nation to ensure that the message was received. More important, however, he requested that she add “a talk of her own.”¹¹⁹ Clearly, Mary was still considered influential among the Creeks and could be trusted by the British to act in the interest of restoring friendly relations.

In the wake of the Cherokee War, Mary retired from public life and took up full-time residence at her plantation on St. Catherine’s Island. She is not specifically mentioned as being present at the Treaty of Augusta in 1763; though she may have still been alive, her absence is not surprising given her advancing age and the difficulties of colonial travel. By that time, however, the dynamics for the Indians had changed significantly; the French and Spanish were gone from the area, and the British held the power. Cultural relations between the colonists and the natives took on a different demeanor after the Seven Years’ War ended, and cultural brokers were not as influential in directing the course of history as they had been in the earlier period when Mary Musgrove dominated the scene.

For the first thirty years of Georgia’s history, there was one constant mediating presence guiding Anglo-native relations. Mary Musgrove helped to secure permission for the initial founding of the colony and, in the subsequent years, aided Oglethorpe in cultivating alliances with the Yamacraws and the Creeks, something the South Carolinians on their own had been unable to do. As a trader, she provided all of the vital services typical of that category of cultural brokers, including interpreting, diplomatic

¹¹⁹*CRG*, 8:314-316, May 26, 1760.

information, and restoring positive relations during tense situations. She also worked closely with other cultural brokers to improve relations between the two societies. Although the colony's missionaries left a meager mark, the limited success they did enjoy was largely due to Mary's involvement. On the other hand, the great successes reaped by Georgia's military personnel with the Indians can also be largely attributed to Mary's efforts. It was only because of Mary's encouragement and intervention that Georgia could recruit so many native allies in the War of Jenkins' Ear and that they could maintain the Creeks' neutrality in the Seven Years' War that followed.

Her choice of husbands was also indicative of the life she led as a cultural broker and of the commitment she made to mediating cultural exchange. Johnny, a mixed-blood trader, helped to secure her connections to both the Creeks and the English and established the livelihood that would keep her involved in bridging the two cultures. Jacob, the military man, complemented her recruiting practices and helped to strengthen native alliances during the crucial time of war. Her last husband was Thomas, the clergyman. Although many questioned his commitment to the cloth and his influence on Mary, her 1744 marriage to the upper-class, full-blooded Englishman improved her status among the British. Despite his efforts to help Mary see her land and salary claims legitimized, the Bosomworths also worked together for the next twenty years to maintain positive relations between the Creeks and the British. Even in light of the legal issues that came to be known as the "Bosomworth Controversy," Mary remained a critical player in interrelations until her death in the mid-1760s. Whether she was known as Coosaponakeesa, Mary, or Mrs. Musgrove, Matthews, or Bosomworth, both sides

understood her importance as a bridge to the other culture while at the same time fully accepting her as one of their own.

Conclusion

From 1733 until 1765, different categories of cultural brokers in Georgia served to bridge the British and native societies and to foster positive relations. Throughout this turbulent time, people in the culturally diverse Southeast somehow managed to coexist, not always peacefully, but with some modicum of understanding. Despite foreign cultures, unfamiliar protocol, and strange languages, the southern natives and the British colonists who lived in the region interacted as neighbors, allies, enemies, business partners, friends, and even lovers. The people who made those interrelations possible, who explained one culture to another, were central figures in colonial history, not marginalized outsiders shunned by society.

In the wake of the Seven Years' War, however, intercultural relations were drastically changed in the Southeast. Most important, the removal of the Spanish and French as viable powers meant that the Indians had no other option than to deal with the British. With the loss of the ability to play one European nation off another, the Indians lost leverage, and the British had more authority to dictate the terms of future Anglo-native relations. The Indian conferences at Augusta in 1763 and Pensacola in 1765 therefore resulted in large land cessions from the natives and a tacit acknowledgment of increased power for the British.

Currying the favor of the Indians and understanding their culture, ideals, and motivations became much less important to British colonial officials without the threats from competing European nations. Neither was securing important diplomatic information from the frontier nearly as vital in the post-war Southeast. The Indians retreated further inland, and opportunities for daily interaction decreased. The importance of worthwhile cultural brokers who understood the subtleties of both cultures consequently declined as well. Certainly, interpreters were still required at conferences, but the need for trustworthy people who could successfully bridge the two cultures waned.

Additionally, many of the types of people who had served to broker cultural exchange in the earlier period ceased to be available after the war. The Georgia Rangers, who had proved so useful in recruiting and leading native allies, were unexpectedly disbanded in 1767. Throughout the rest of the colonial period and most of the Revolution, Georgia's military would be represented only by local militias and a handful of regulars. These few officers and men were stationed at the old forts at Frederica and Augusta. But by 1765, the recent land cessions and the retreating natives meant that these posts were far removed from the Anglo-native frontier.¹ In addition, missionaries willing to work among the Indians continued to remain conspicuously absent in Georgia.

Traders continued to interact with the natives, but the nature of the Indian trade also changed after 1765. The new licencing system was extremely lenient, and the Indian

¹James M. Johnson, *Militiamen, Rangers, and Redcoats: The Military in Georgia, 1754-1776* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1992), 67-8, 77.

nations were overrun with “Arab-like pedlars sculk[ing] about.” Whereas the former laws allowed only one trader in each village, the postwar system did not limit the number of traders. The lower character of these new traders, coupled with the increased competition, translated into serious problems for the Indian trade. Many long-time traders complained of a drastic increase in the use of liquor to win customers and of unprincipled dealings with the Indians.² These practices not only threatened Indian relations but also lessened the character and importance of the Indian traders in general. A few seasoned veterans, such as Lachlan McGillivray and George Galphin, remained influential in the postwar period. But, for the most part, traders were not capable of mediating between the two cultures after 1765 as they had been during the first thirty years of Georgia’s existence.

In the early years, however, cultural brokers were key to Georgia’s success. Especially given South Carolina’s poor track record in Indian relations, the new colony needed to establish a different course of interaction with its native neighbors. Georgia’s cultural brokers helped to create an atmosphere of understanding and interaction that ensured an impressive level of British-native cooperation and resulted in a colonial history devoid of any major Indian wars. The role that these people played in securing and maintaining positive interaction among the various groups in the area had implications not only for Georgia, but the entire Southeast. By putting Britain’s relations with the Southeastern Indians on much better terms than they had been before 1733,

²James Adair, *History of the American Indians*, ed. by Samuel Cole Williams (New York: Promontory Press, 1930), 393-94.

Georgia's cultural brokers helped to increase British influence in the area. With their improved standing among the natives, the British could more effectively counteract French and Spanish designs. By 1765, of course, the British had defeated both France and Spain, and Britain controlled the entire Southeast.

During the first thirty-two years of Georgia's history, there was a remarkable amount of interaction among the disparate groups within and near the colony's borders. Many natives and colonists interacted on a daily basis, socializing, exchanging food and information, and providing services for one another. In many of these instances, the colonists and the natives brokered their own exchanges; since interaction was so frequent, members of both societies were adept in engaging with members from the other. Many natives could communicate adequately in the various European languages, pidgin languages such as the Mobilian trade language developed, and if all else failed, sign languages could be employed. For nuanced understandings of the other culture, however, people from both sides were dependent upon the different categories of cultural brokers; they looked to the traders, military personnel, qualified Indians, and to a lesser extent, missionaries, to explain the cultural subtleties of the other. The level and sophistication of the interaction that occurred in Georgia would not have been possible without these cultural brokers.

The level of their involvement in intercultural relations ran deep, for they were responsible for fulfilling a variety of social, economic, and diplomatic roles. They relayed messages, invitations, and concerns. They served as escorts, interpreters, and recruiters. They provided information, means for redress, and justice. For all the ways in

which they maintained positive cultural relations between the natives and the colonists, they were indispensable to both sides.

For the brokers, their importance garnered them a favored position in both of the societies they bridged. In the Southeast at least, cultural brokers were not social misfits on the fringe of society. They were very much front-and-center – contributing members who were highly regarded for the important role they played and fully accepted by both groups.

In colonial Georgia, these brokers made great strides in working towards creating a common ground where both natives and newcomers could understand one another. Their presence ensured positive Anglo-native relations throughout the thirty-year time span and allowed a level of intimacy and understanding that otherwise would have been unattainable. If a “middle ground” – a place where Indians and colonists felt at ease with each other – never fully materialized in the colonial Southeast, at least Georgia benefitted from the vital presence of brokers who were willing and able to cross the cultural divide on their behalf.

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